

UNIVERSITY

MISSISSIPPI

HONOR REPORT

FALL 2023



Greetings from the
DEAN



Ethel Young Scurlock (Photo by Tenola Plaxico)

This past academic year has included wonderful celebrations for the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College. Our Fall Convocation honored the Barksdale family, with presentations from three distinguished alumni: Markeeva Morgan, Patrick Woodyard and Sarah Barch. Our spring semester Undergraduate Research Poster Symposium featured another distinguished SMBHC alumna: Judge Tamika Montgomery-Reeves of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit.

We also had the opportunity to reconnect with many of you through special alumni outreach events in Jackson and Washington, D.C., and look forward to reaching more places. I love meeting all of you and hearing about the important work that you are doing in the world. If you would like to help us host a mixer in your area, please let us know.

I continue to be amazed by the large impact of the SMBHC over the last 25 years. Since our inception, we have served over 8,200 Honors College students. While most of our students are from Mississippi, we have had representation from 47 states, the District of Columbia and 20 foreign countries. Our honors students continue to garner prestigious awards such as the Rhodes, Truman, Goldwater, Fulbright and Boren scholarships. We are especially proud of the way that our student research accomplishments continue to stand out when compared with other honors colleges in the nation. The Portz Award recognizes the best honors theses in the nation; in the past 20 years, nine SMBHC students have been Portz Scholars. Even more impressive, a SMBHC student has won the Portz for the past four years.

We need your support to keep advancing the Honors College. We need you to help connect our students with opportunities, we need you to share your stories as encouragement for them on the journey, and we also need your financial support. By now, most of you have heard about the University of Mississippi’s Now and Ever campaign. We are especially thankful for Jan Pilko and other members of this campaign for helping us advance honors education at the university. Since 2000, 754 students have benefited from over \$1.5 million in fellowship awards to support their study abroad experiences or unpaid internships. Donor support also helps us attract the best students with generous scholarships.

This year, with over 500 freshmen, we are welcoming the largest class in the history of the SMBHC. Your donations of time, talent and treasure will help us deliver on our promise to provide unparalleled academic support to every student we serve.

I continue to count it a privilege to join in the Honors College’s long legacy of excellent scholarship, sincere service and innovative approaches to leading and learning. We are marching forward with the strong support of Chancellor Glenn Boyce and Provost Noel Wilkin, who both are committed to ensuring that our Honors College has the resources we need to continue advancing our community of citizen scholars.

As you read the stories in this year’s *Honors Report*, you will see the incredible achievements of our students, staff, faculty and alumni. I hope you will consider sharing your own honors stories with us in the upcoming months and connecting with our undergraduates. As we move forward together, let’s continue making a large impact at the University of Mississippi, in our local communities, throughout our state and across the globe.

Ethel Young Scurlock
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JOIN US! Honors Fall Convocation
Tuesday, Sept. 26,
7:30 p.m., Ford Center



Bruce Levingston
and SMBHC student
Chloe King in the
Ford Center (Photo
by Thomas Graning)

A Year of Celebration

BRUCE LEVINGSTON

It has been a wonderful year in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College. Our students celebrated many remarkable moments and achievements throughout the year — from creating special memories and adventures abroad to exploring and finding solutions for our complex world closer to home. Our official kickoff began with the annual Welcome Concert I perform at the Ford Center for our incoming freshmen. I am happy to report our Class of 2026 is delightful, engaged and extremely

impressive. Following the performance, a large group of students stayed behind to chat. We all laughed a lot, shared stories about our different backgrounds and experiences, and even showed photos of our favorite pets! Before we left, we all agreed to stay in touch and have a dinner during the year. This spring, we finally got together for a “pizza and puppies” supper party! I am looking forward to seeing all of these brilliant students in my class in the coming years. Many have already embarked on amazing journeys. One enterprising freshman — Dan Sloan — headed to Rwanda this summer to work for the Buffett

Foundation. Others went on to study and work in Europe, as well as other parts of the world. This group of students is just fearless.

A few weeks later, I was honored to open the Ford Center’s 20th anniversary with a special concert that also celebrated the newly formed University of Mississippi Institute for the Arts, founded by our dedicated Honors College supporters Jan and Lawrence Farrington, proud grandparents of our recent HoCo graduate Griffin Clark and outstanding SMBHC senior Alice Ann Hollingsworth. A number of students from our fine departments in the arts at Ole Miss



Above: Spring 2023
Interactions of Art and
Music class with Bruce
Levingston and students

Right: Fall 2022 Art and
the Republic class with
Levingston and students



joined me on the Ford Center program highlighting their extraordinary skills in drama, dance, music and literature. One of our star honors students — Chloe King, recipient of the prestigious UM Taylor Medal and a superb marimba player, performed a beautiful a duet with me. In turn, she graciously invited me to join her on her senior recital, which was an honor and joy. Having received one of the highest MCAT scores in the country, Chloe is now on her way to medical school and undoubtedly will forge an important career in medicine. She assures us she’s also going to keep up with her music, too!

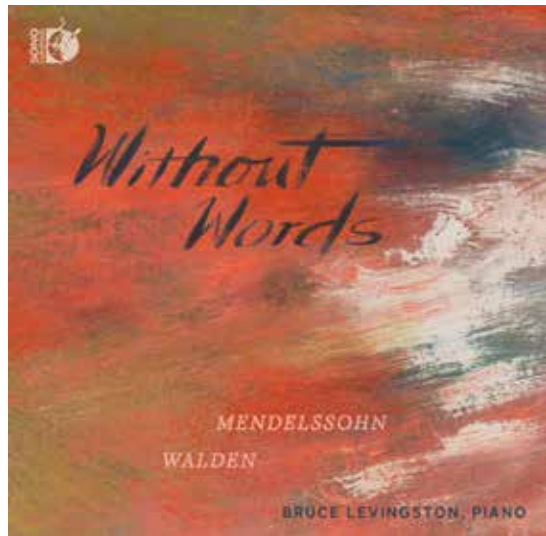
Some of my other outstanding students also reported fantastic news about their futures in medicine. Three students from my “Art and the Republic” class, Khadeejah Franklin, Taylor Lampkin and Micaela Shields, were all recently admitted into medical school at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. I am so proud of them. Micaela is also a talented pianist and performed alongside me for our Honors Showcase

and our final class dinner. She received an important scholarship to attend UMMC generously funded by the Barksdale family.

Other exciting news from some of my gifted students includes Magdalena Hendrikson’s acceptance to the Georgetown University School of Law. Mary Patton Murphy, a classmate of Magdalena’s and a wonderful violinist, has taken a position working with leading Ole Miss supporters Bruce and Karen Moore and their charitable foundation in Nashville. Our “Interactions of Art and Music” spring class was especially blessed this year with other great performers and artists. In addition to Mary Patton and Micaela, Harrison Foxworth (our former Mr. Ole Miss now headed to law school) and Stone Tosh gave a memorable — and quite hilarious — performance from “The Music Man” for our class. Feagin Hardy, a brilliant senior, read some of her deeply moving poetry, and David Phillips, a junior, shared some of his exquisite nature photography. Finally, Caleb Bohannon,

an SMBHC senior, dazzled us all with an amazing performance on the buckets and then won Mr. University with an encore performance at the Ford Center.

Over the years, I have been privileged to teach a number of students who have received scholarships from the incredible Ole Miss Women's Council. This spring, the Women's Council honored longtime Ole Miss supporter and alumnus Ambassador John Palmer. A telecommunications visionary and legendary founder of MTel, Ambassador Palmer has been an inspirational supporter of arts and education, as well as Ole Miss athletics. The Women's Council invited me to give a special performance in his honor that



Cover of Bruce Levingston's new album 'Without Words' to be released in September 2023

evening. I invited the acclaimed young cellist and conductor William Walker, a good friend of mine and the Palmer family, to join me on the program. Born in Mississippi, William has built an impressive career in Vienna where he heads an orchestra. After our performances, the irrepressible Ole Miss Rebelettes gave John a rousing encore cheer. Among their performers was our own SMBHC senior Hayden Hubbell, who helped us coordinate this wonderful tribute to Ambassador Palmer.

I am looking forward to another remarkable year in the Honors College. On Sept. 22, I will release my 10th solo album, which contains an exquisite new cycle of works by former Honors College student and UM graduate Price Walden paired with beautiful music by Felix Mendelssohn. The cover was especially created for the album by renowned painter and UM Department of Art and Honors College professor Philip Jackson. This is the kind of magical collaboration that our Honors College inspires. We are always changing, learning and growing with each other. I hope you'll visit us soon and share the special magic of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College!

Bruce Levingston

Chancellor's Honors College Artist in Residence
Holder of the Lester Glenn Fant Chair



Bruce Levingston and members of the Class of 2026

FEATURED PHOTO-GRAPHER:

HG Biggs is entering her senior year at the University of Mississippi and as a student of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College. She is studying Mandarin Chinese in the Chinese Language Flagship Program and minoring in chemistry and intelligence and security studies.

Although she started her college career double majoring in Chinese and international studies in the Croft Institute, sophomore year she realized her true passion lay with photography, and she dropped her double major to put more time into pursuing photojournalism. Biggs credits taking photos at her brothers' Little League baseball games with her mom's camera when she was a kid as the start of her photo career. Baseball remains her favorite sport to photograph to this day.

Biggs spent three years working for UM's student newspaper, *The Daily Mississippian*, two and a half of which she served as the photo editor. Starting her freshman year, she worried there wouldn't be a place for her as a photographer at a larger SEC college; however, then-photo editor Billy Schuerman hired her as a staff photographer in fall 2020, and the rest is history. In addition to her work as photo editor, Biggs has freelanced for various departments across campus, including the Honors College.

When Biggs attended the Atlanta Photojournalism Seminar in fall 2022 with professor Michael Fagans, her work caught the eye of Mike Stewart, Associated Press regional photo editor for the southern U.S. Shortly afterwards, she covered several assignments as a freelancer for AP.



HG Biggs (Photo by Michael Fagans)

Biggs spent summer 2023 working as a photo intern at *The Chautauquan Daily* in Chautauqua, New York, and she plans to intern as a photographer under Josh McCoy with Ole Miss Athletics this fall.

When she isn't on the clock, Biggs still carries her camera almost everywhere with her.

"I feel like a piece of me is missing if I don't have my camera on me," she said.

She enjoys documenting the small details of life that she sees every day, from the late evening shadows cast by trees outside the library to friends laughing during a game night. When shooting sports, she tries to look for moments beyond the action and finds that her favorite photos are often those of players interacting before and during the game in the dugout, rather than the dramatic slides into second base.

"Photojournalism is so much more than what's on the front page," Biggs said. "We cover the difficult stories because they're important, but what's the point of fighting through hardship and covering those stories if we don't remember what we're doing that work for?"

"I love covering stories where people just get to enjoy being in each other's presence and enjoy being alive, because we have to remember that we fight through difficult things and cover hard stories to have those joyful moments in life, to have that community and love of our fellow human beings."

Meet our Honors Report

Cover ARTIST

Tiffany Hershfelt is an artist and educator. She earned her B.F.A. in studio art with an emphasis in printmaking from the University of Mississippi and her M.A.T. in teaching arts from Mississippi College. She is an art teacher at Oxford High School, where she is about to begin her third year of teaching. She has taught various art classes, including Visual Arts I & II, Drawing I & II, Painting I & II, and beginning this school year, Ceramics I & II. Hershfelt is also the sponsor for the Oxford High School Art Club. Students participated in this year's Double Decker Arts Festival, where they shared their talents in many different media forms, including oil and acrylic painting, pencil, colored pencil, charcoal drawings, photography and ceramics.

Most of Hershfelt's work is based on commission but is not limited to paper. Outside of paintings and drawings, she does floral and Christmas interior decorating. She also enjoys calligraphy – creating anything from custom signs to addressing invitations. She considers all of her clients as new friends, as they are supporting her artistic talents and gifts she enjoys doing so much.

She is married to Hayden Hershfelt, youth director at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, and they share two dogs, Kenai and Dani. Apart from spending time with their dogs, they enjoy running, biking, hiking and traveling. She is an EF Tours leader, where she just returned with her first group of students from Italy, Austria, Germany and the Czech Republic. In summer 2024, she will take a group of students to Japan.



Tiffany Hershfelt in Alaska (Photo by Hayden Hershfelt)

Follow Hershfelt's creations:
@priewe_designs

Tiffany



ABOUT THE COVER:

'Oxford Totem.' 2023
11" x 14"
Watercolor and black ink
on watercolor paper
by Tiffany Hershfelt

Behind the COVER ART

The "Oxford Totem" watercolor painting has been an enjoyable process for me to create while relaxing in my home. Apart from teaching, I enjoy building relationships with my commission clientele because they are supporting my creative outlet. Most of my paintings are soft, neutral, often faceless people, pets and homes. I wanted to create a piece that was 100% unique and different from any watercolor I had done before. To do this, I needed to be inspired. Every time I stop to ask myself, "What inspires me?", the answer is always the same. Alaska.

If you knew me in undergrad, you'd find all the artwork I produced was in some shape or form inspired by Alaska. Being born and raised in Anchorage, I found ways to add mountains and salmon to my drawings or paintings, and moose antlers or fish scales to my ceramics. I photographed mostly nature in my photography courses and used hiking to inspire product design. I also enjoyed designing mandalas, which were turned into dream catchers and tribal-style eagles often found in my printmaking classes.

Thinking back to these creations, I wanted to somehow combine my Alaskan roots with my new life in Mississippi. I moved to Oxford in 2010, so I would consider Mississippi my new home away from home. A piece of me is still missing though, which is only filled when I make it back to Alaska for a visit. Two years ago, I got married out in the

middle of nowhere, Alaska. While we were there, I vividly remember the totem poles. The Native American art style is seen everywhere up there, something not commonly seen in Mississippi. I wanted to bring that totem pole concept to life, but using elements of Oxford, and bring a subdued version of that style to Mississippi, combining my new homes.

The bottom of the totem pole starts with Princess Hoka, a Chickasaw woman from Lafayette County, whose memory is making a grand reappearance in Oxford lately that really stuck out to me. A beautiful mural of her can be seen on the Square, and again in our "Greetings from Oxford" mural behind City Hall.

Above her is the famous red telephone booth located near William Faulkner's statue downtown. Written on one of our famous Grove squirrels is "Yoknapatawpha," a famous fictional town in Faulkner's books but also the name of our city's arts council.

Across the telephone booth written in calligraphy is "Velvet Ditch." Locals know what this means, and I consider myself one of them since I came back like a boomerang after moving to North Carolina for only a year.

Stretching out the arms of the totem makes the Walk of Champions and the Grove, a place where every home football game becomes the city's new home full of family and friends you didn't know you had. The head of the pole starts with one of our Oxford water towers, done in our favorite powder blue, and finishes with the clock tower on the city's square center, the courthouse.

When I finished, I didn't feel like it was complete, as artists always do. It was missing something. I soon realized it wasn't missing anything; rather, it needed another version. Something about Oxford and the college town energy it evokes needed bolder colors. Having just finished teaching a unit on fauvism, I knew exactly what to do. I created an entire second piece from start to finish, but using a completely different color palette. Finally, "Oxford Totem" had two versions of home, just like me.

Submitted photo



2023 GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Loral Winn

Dresden, Tennessee, native Loral Winn completed her bachelor's degree in journalism with an emphasis in TV and video storytelling along with a minor in Spanish in May 2023. This fall at UM, she is continuing her work toward completing a master's degree in journalism. When asked to reflect on her undergraduate time as a student-athlete, she penned the following remarks for this report.

When I was navigating the recruiting process as a high school student, I was fortunate enough to have a list of schools to choose from that likely all could have been deemed good choices on paper. But, more than making a good choice, I wanted to make the right one. I chose Ole Miss because I knew that I would be challenged both athletically and academically as well as personally. I wanted to attend a university where I had an opportunity to be competitive both in the classroom and on the track and cross-country course. The University of Mississippi offered me the chance to better myself in every aspect of life.

Academics has always been just as important to me as athletics, which is why I decided to pursue a spot in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College. I was accepted into the Honors College, and as the first week of freshman year began, I quickly realized that I had quite the undertaking on my hands. Managing the schedule of being a college-athlete, competing three seasons throughout the year, maintaining grades that I expected to be exceptional, and balancing life outside of classes and my sport was not easy.

There were many days when I sat overwhelmed, wondering how I was going to get all of my homework done. My first two years of undergrad



Winn, racing in the 2023 SEC Outdoor Championships 1500 meter prelim in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. 'In terms of being a complete student-athlete, no one exemplifies what you're looking for better than Loral Winn,' said Adam Smith, Ole Miss' cross-country/distance coach. 'From being a straight-A student in the classroom to being a national contender on the track and cross-country course, Loral has set numerous school records, while accumulating a near-perfect academic resume that will set her up for her professional career in whatever path she chooses. A natural born leader, Loral has earned the respect of her teammates and coaches by continuing to raise the bar for herself and consistently putting herself out there as one of the most successful faces of our program. Loral makes us all proud here, and I know she will continue to set the standard of what being a student-athlete is all about here at Ole Miss. There will be big shoes to fill when she leaves Oxford, but I know our program will be in a better place because of the impact she has made with all of us.' (Photo by Reed Jones, Ole Miss Athletics)



Winn finished fourth in the 2023 SEC Outdoor Championships 1500 meter final. (Photo by Reed Jones, Ole Miss Athletics)

were the most difficult because I didn't yet have a good grasp on how to handle the stress of being a collegiate student-athlete who was also learning how to be an adult. Somewhere along the way, I chose to lean into the hard. I allowed myself to sit in the difficult moments, knowing that they were stretching me and making me more resilient.

When I allow myself to look back on the past four years at Ole Miss, I often become emotional. I vividly remember every moment. I remember sitting in some classes after long travel trips with, quite honestly, tears in my eyes from both exhaustion and actual concerns that I wasn't able to prepare enough for an exam or presentation. I remember walking and nearly running to some



Winn receives her diploma cover from Andrea Hickerson, dean of the School of Journalism and New Media. (Photo by Kiana Dale, Ole Miss Athletics)



Loral Winn completed her honors thesis, 'How Medical Cannabis Took Root in Mississippi,' under the direction of Iveta Imre, assistant professor of journalism. Professor Imre shared, 'Loral is one of the most hardworking and talented students I've had the pleasure of having in my classes. She is very passionate about journalism, and her passion shines through all the stories she covers. She is always ready to take on difficult stories or hop in the car to travel two hours — like she did to cover the aftermath of tornadoes in Mississippi. She has a bright future ahead, and I cannot wait to see how her career develops.' (Photo courtesy of Loral Winn)

classes after morning practices, and I think of some of the concerned conversations I had with professors who took time to invest in me as a student and individual.

To be honest, I laugh at myself a lot for how worried or stressed I allowed myself to become during the beginning of my undergraduate career. It was challenging and difficult at times, but if I learned anything from balancing being a student-athlete

the past four years, it is that I can do absolutely anything. No obstacle is too large, and no feat is impossible. More than anything, my faith in the Lord and awe in him grew in ways I cannot even explain. I did the work and received recognition, but he gave me the endurance and the ability to do so. I am so grateful for every mountaintop but even more so for the valleys. They have made me who I am today! **HR**

OFFICE OF NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP ADVISEMENT

Year in Review

VIVIAN IBRAHIM, ONSA DIRECTOR (Photos courtesy of students pictured except where noted)

It's that time of year again when I get to brag on how incredibly talented our students are. At the Office of National Scholarship Advisement, we stick by our mantra, "It's about the process." Our aim is to promote a process focused on self-development. As we work with students to craft their applications, they hopefully gain clarity on their goals, reflect on their priorities and find a path to achieve them. This is not something they wing or put together overnight. Our students worked hard putting together applications, writing drafts, rewriting and interviewing for awards. On average, each application takes nine drafts and many weeks, if not months of work. This year, ONSA endorsed more students than ever for competitive national and global awards. We had hundreds of meetings with interested students, 88 completed and endorsed applications, 41 semifinalists and 24 awardees. **This has been the best year yet!**

Over the last three years, the ONSA team has worked hard to create a culture of applying for scholarships on our campus. This year, we held information sessions and workshops, and targeted individual students, groups and departments for specific awards. We held "pizza push parties" for the Fulbright, Goldwater and Truman. We also held an "I clicked submit" gathering to celebrate all completions after each award.

In May 2023, we celebrated all our students in an end-of-year reception. All completions and semifinalists were awarded cords, while all awardees received stoles to wear with their graduation robes. We hope the next cohort of students sees that applying for an award is possible; it requires work and dedication, but it is well within reach.

We celebrate all 2022-23 completions, finalists and winners. Congratulations!

BOREN

This year, ONSA endorsed and helped nine applicants apply for the Boren awards. The Boren scholarships provide up to \$25,000 to U.S. students to study abroad in areas of the world that are critical to U.S. interests. Boren scholars (undergraduate) and fellows (graduate) study critical languages and plan to work in positions crucial to U.S. national security.

UM was awarded four Boren scholarships and one Boren fellowship.

Manuel Campbell, of Jackson, is majoring in biochemistry and was awarded a Boren to Korea. Campbell declined his Boren because he was awarded a Fulbright!

Shekinah Doze, of Columbia, Missouri, was named a Boren fellow. She is completing a Ph.D. in nutrition science and will be studying Arabic in Oman.



CAMPBELL



DOZE



FABIAN

Samantha Fabian, of Omaha, Nebraska, is a business major minoring in entrepreneurship and Chinese.



HALL

Sarah Hall, of Madison, and **Susan Soh**, of Houston, Texas, will complete their fifth-year Chinese Flagship capstone in Taiwan as scholars. Hall is a Chinese major with a minor in Korean and global security studies, while Soh is a double major in international studies and Chinese.



SOH

FULBRIGHT AWARDS

Last year, we spoke about UM's record-breaking year. Well, this year broke last year's record! Since 1950, UM has had 59 Fulbright awardees; 15 of those have been in the last three years. ONSA is committed to making UM a top-producing Fulbright institution, and we are well on our way!

The Fulbright is our lengthiest national scholarship process that begins at least nine months ahead of the award announcements. (It's a long birthing process!) The Fulbright U.S. Student Program provides students with the opportunity to teach as an English teaching assistant, or ETA, study for a master's degree or conduct independent research in over 130 countries worldwide.

Over the summer break, we ran a series of one-month Fulbright boot camps online that guided students through the process of writing an application. After multiple drafts, we had 23 fantastic Fulbright completions. The students underwent the rigorous process of internal interviews and submitted their applications in October. Over the winter break, we found out that 14 were awarded semifinalist status and would move on to in-country commission consideration. Ultimately, eight UM applicants were awarded the Fulbright.

This is the most we have ever had! In addition, we had two alternates: **Jilkih Bryant**, of Macon, Malawi ETA; and **Londyn Lorenz**, of Perryville, Missouri, Fulbright Study, University College Dublin.

Manuel Campbell, of Jackson, is a biochemistry major and was awarded an ETA to South Korea, which he will begin in January 2024.

Alyssa Langlois, of New Orleans, is an international studies major and was awarded an ETA to Switzerland. This is a brand-new award, and she is the first ETA Fulbrighter to a French classroom in Switzerland.

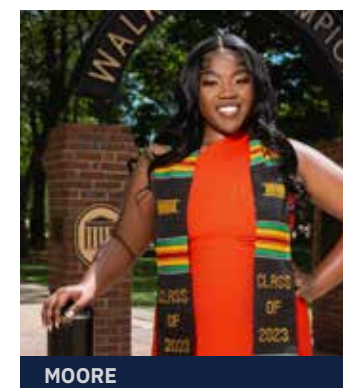
Rabria Moore, of Durant, a journalism and political science major, will postpone her acceptance to Harvard to complete an M.A. in education after receiving the Fulbright. She is our first-ever awardee to Zambia.



CAMPBELL



LANGLOIS



MOORE

Savannah Whittemore, of Grenada, is a law student and has won the prestigious Fulbright research award to examine the intersection of genocide, free speech and prosecution. She will be based at the Institute for Diaspora Research and Genocide Studies at Ruhr University in Bochum, Germany.

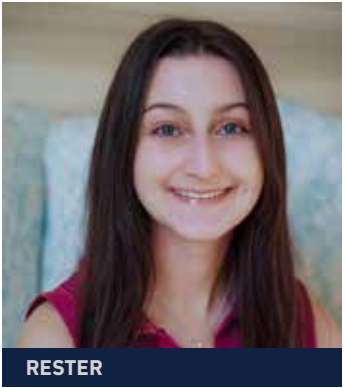
Emily Wang, of Randolph, New Jersey, is an international studies, Arabic and Chinese major. She was awarded a Fulbright Study to the Netherlands. She will attend Maastricht University to complete a master’s degree in public health.

A special shoutout to the German department that produced three Fulbright ETAs to Germany this year!

Edith Marie Green, of Oxford, is an international studies and German major who has been accepted to a doctoral program in Madison, Wisconsin.

Sydney Rester, of Oxford, is a biomedical engineering major and was also awarded the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange. This is a one-year program in partnership between the U.S. Congress and its German counterpart. Participants in the CBYX program spend two months undergoing German language training; study for a semester at a university, technical or professional school; and finish out the academic year program getting practical work experience.

Mikayla Jordan, of Hattiesburg, completed an M.A. in German and was awarded both the Fulbright ETA to Germany and the Fulbright Austria USTA. The USTA is a sister program to the Fulbright run by the Austrian-American Educational Commission. Jordan has chosen to accept the USTA and will be teaching in Austria next year.



GOLDWATER

The Goldwater is one of the oldest and most prestigious national scholarships in STEM. It supports exceptional sophomores and juniors who show promise in becoming the next generation of research leaders in these fields. This year, 413 scholarships were awarded from a pool of 1,267 undergraduates nominated by 427 institutions. Following an internal UM application process, four UM students went through to the national stage.

For the second year in a row, three UM students were Goldwater recipients.

Noah Garrett, of Madison, is a junior studying chemistry and mathematics and has been conducting research under associate professor of chemistry Ryan Fortenberry in his computational and



astrochemistry lab. At the time of his Goldwater application, Garrett had worked on five different research projects. He had a total of six presentations, one publication in the *Journal of Physical Chemistry Chemical Physics* and one submission under review to the same journal.

Alyssa Stoner, of Gulfport, is a junior biology major and is completing her thesis under the directorship of Yongjian Qiu, assistant professor of biology. Stoner had gained valuable research experience with Washington University in St. Louis as a research fellow. At the time of her Goldwater application, she had one publication in *Blood*, a national professional journal, and one presentation. She was also working on a journal article to be submitted to the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, or PNAS.

Christian Boudreaux, of Oxford, is a sophomore biology major with a specific interest in marine biology. He is the founder of the student organization Aquaculture, an environmental conservation initiative that protects and conserves marine and freshwater environments.

Boudreaux was also awarded the prestigious National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Hollings Scholarship. The Hollings Scholarship program provides successful undergraduate applicants with awards that include academic assistance (up to \$9,500 per year) for two years of full-time study and a 10-week, full-time, paid (\$700/week) internship at a NOAA facility during the summer.

NSF GRFP

The National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program, or NSF GRFP, supports STEM students who are pursuing research-based master’s and doctoral degrees at accredited U.S. institutions. The five-year fellowship includes three years of financial support including an annual stipend of \$37,000 and a cost of education allowance of \$12,000 to the institution. Working in collaboration with UM

partners — the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and the Graduate School — we produced four recipients this year.

Ethan Lambert, of Kossuth, was a Goldwater recipient in 2022.

Mary Beth Vanlandingham, of Florence

Sydney Wicks, of Clinton

Emily Rasmussen, of Union Grove, Wisconsin



TRUMAN

This year, **Madeleine Dotson** was awarded the Harry Truman Scholarship for the state of Alabama.

The Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation awards merit-based scholarships to college students who are planning careers in public service. Truman scholars receive up to \$30,000 for graduate or professional school, participate in leadership development activities, and have special opportunities for internships and employment with the federal government.

Dotson, from Mobile, Alabama, is an Arabic, economics and political science major who is passionate about disaster resiliency and climate change. She is head ambassador for the Center for Community Engagement, a Stamps Scholar and two-time National Security Language Initiative for Youth, or NSLI-Y, recipient, as well as a Gilman Scholar. During Truman Scholars Leadership Week in May, Dotson officially received her award at the Truman Presidential Library in Independence, Missouri, signed by President Joe Biden.



Madeleine Dotson holds her certificate signed by President Biden. (Photo by Vivian Ibrahim)

ONSA RECEPTION, 2023

Right: Caroline Sturgis (left), Alyssa Stoner and Noah Garrett. (Photo by HG Biggs)



Below: Back row, from left: Savannah Whittemore, Alyssa Langlois, Yaniv Goulet, Manuel Campbell, Rabria Moore and Mikayla Jordan. Front row from left: Edith-Marie Green and Jilkhiah Bryant. (Photo by HG Biggs)



UK SUMMER FULBRIGHT

Benson Le, a freshman from Starkville, has received a place with a Fulbright Summer Institute to study at Glasgow University on one of the most prestigious and selective summer scholarship programs operating worldwide. Le was selected by the US-UK Fulbright Commission to experience the UK for four weeks.

The summer institute forms part of the US-UK Fulbright Commission's work to promote leadership, learning and empathy between nations through educational exchange. The commission selects participants through a rigorous application and interview process. In making these awards, the commission looks not only for academic excellence but also a focused application, a range of extracurricular and community activities, demonstrated ambassadorial skills and a plan to give back to the recipient's home country upon returning. Le is the first UM recipient of the UK Summer Institute in five years.



A special shoutout to our campus nominees, semifinalists and finalists.

Congratulations — we are so incredibly proud of you!

- Jilkhiah Bryant**, finalist, Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowship
- Juliana French**, semifinalist, Fulbright Study Award, University of Kent, UK
- Chloe Grant**, semifinalist, Fulbright Study Award, University of Newcastle, UK
- Julia James**, semifinalist, Fulbright Study Award, University of Sussex, UK
- Connor Young**, semifinalist, Fulbright Study Award, University of Nottingham, UK
- Caroline Sturgis**, campus nominee, Goldwater Scholarship
- Rabria Moore**, finalist, Marshall Scholarship
- Claire Sullivan**, finalist, Pickering Scholarship and Rangel Scholarship
- Peyton Miller**, campus nominee (Alabama), Truman Scholarship
- Maddy Ryan**, campus nominee (Tennessee), Truman Scholarship
- Jhalen Wells**, campus nominee (Mississippi), Truman Scholarship



To learn more about national scholarships, visit onsa.olemiss.edu. Interested in applying? Email ONSA@olemiss.edu.

Photo by Tenola Plaxico



Vivian Ibrahim
Director, Office of National Scholarship Advisement

Photo by Kevin Bain



Whitney Woods
Assistant Director, ONSA

2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS

09
22



Ember Suh (SMBHC 23) was selected as a 2022-23 ToxMSDT mentee. The Toxicology Mentoring and Skills Development Training program is a one-year mentorship funded by the National Institutes of Health, and mentees “are matched 1:1 with mentors primarily from industry, government and nongovernmental organizations.” As part of the program, Suh met her mentee cohort at University of California-Davis as well as attended the Society of Toxicology Annual Meeting in San Diego and participated in capstone activities at Tuskegee University in Alabama. About the mentorship, Suh said, “The ToxMSDT program gave me — a first-generation student — advice for applying to graduate schools and a network with toxicology professionals.”

Last year, Suh took a toxicology class taught by Kristie Willett, UM professor of pharmacology and environmental toxicology and chair of the Department of BioMolecular Sciences, and has engaged in multiple conversations with Willett about toxicology as a career track.

Suh graduated in May with a degree in forensic chemistry, minoring in biology and completing her thesis in chemistry under the direction of Eden Tanner, UM assistant professor of chemistry and biochemistry. During her undergraduate tenure, Suh served as president of the Ole Miss Korean Students Association and was a Ronald E. McNair Scholar and a Forensic Chemistry Student Ambassador. In 2019, she won the Cynthia Krieser Award for Outstanding Freshman Writing for her narrative about her Korean-American identity, as well as the American Chemical Society’s Analytical Chemistry Division Award. Suh is pursuing a Ph.D. in biomedical sciences with a concentration in pharmaceutical sciences and toxicology at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center and School of Medicine. (Photo by Kevin Bain)

10
22

Last October, **Sarah Sawaya** (SMBHC 25) raced in the Ironman World Championship in Kona, Hawaii, where she was the youngest American competitor! Here’s an excerpt from David W. Chen’s “More College Athletes Are Trekking to Ironman” in *The New York Times* in which Sawaya was quoted: “The Ironman totals 140.6 miles — 2.4 miles of swimming, 112 miles of bicycling and 26.2 miles of running — and must be completed in 17 hours. ‘On the run, I was falling asleep,’ [said] Sawaya, a sophomore studying biomedical engineering. But she soldiered on, thanking the volunteers donning canary-colored T-shirts who lined the course and befriending other triathletes. As night fell, one man who ran alongside her for 10 miles told her he had a daughter her age. So when she finished, in 15:34:19, beaded by a light rain, she raised her arms and beamed. It was 10:19 p.m. ‘So many stories,’ she said. ‘All the pain, all the pain — it was worth it.’” (Photo by Mia A’i for *The New York Times*)



2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS

11
22

For the fourth year in a row, a Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College graduate was named a Portz Scholar! **Austin Wallace** presented his honors thesis, “Computational Electronic Spectroscopy Predictions for Astrochemical Ice Analogues and Data Analysis for Experimental Spectra,” at the 2022 National Collegiate Honors Council Annual Conference in Dallas. The Southaven native is one of four recipients nationwide and won \$350 (and high praise from the selection committee). Wallace graduated in May 2022 with a bachelor’s degree in chemistry and completed his honors thesis under the direction of Ryan Fortenberry, associate professor of chemistry and biochemistry. Wallace is pursuing a Ph.D. in computational chemistry at Georgia Tech as a National Science Foundation Graduate Fellow and GT Presidential Fellow. Wallace won the prestigious Goldwater scholarship in 2021. Previous Portz winners are Brigitte Lewis (2021, African American studies and English), Genevieve Verville (2020, chemistry), Kennedy Dickson (2019, forensic chemistry), Amir Aziz (2015, international studies), Andrew Paul (2012, religious studies), Ryan Parsons (2011, international studies and Chinese), Heather Carrillo (2006, classics and art history) and Amanda Guth (2002, psychology). (Photo by Rachel Hammond)



12
22



Honors alumni, including **Kathryn James McGraw** (SMBHC 17, MAT 19) and **Jake McGraw** (SMBHC 11), and stakeholders gathered in Jackson for an evening of hors d’oeuvres and good conversation. (Photo by Patrice Jenkins)

May 2023 honors graduates **Alyssa Langlois** (left), **Jon Dotson** and **Kaylee Markham** presented their undergraduate research at the Mississippi Honors Conference, hosted by Itawamba Community College. International studies and French major Langlois won first place for the humanities and social sciences (four-year institution) category. In May, Dotson earned a dual degree in Arabic and chemistry, and Markham earned a degree in psychology. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)



02
23



2023 GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Sydney
WHEELER

Sydney Wheeler is a 2023 graduate of the SMBHC. She served as class marshal of the College of Liberal Arts and earned a degree in economics with minors in chemistry, mathematics and neuroscience, finishing with a 4.00 GPA. She is originally from Bowling Green, Kentucky, where she lives on her

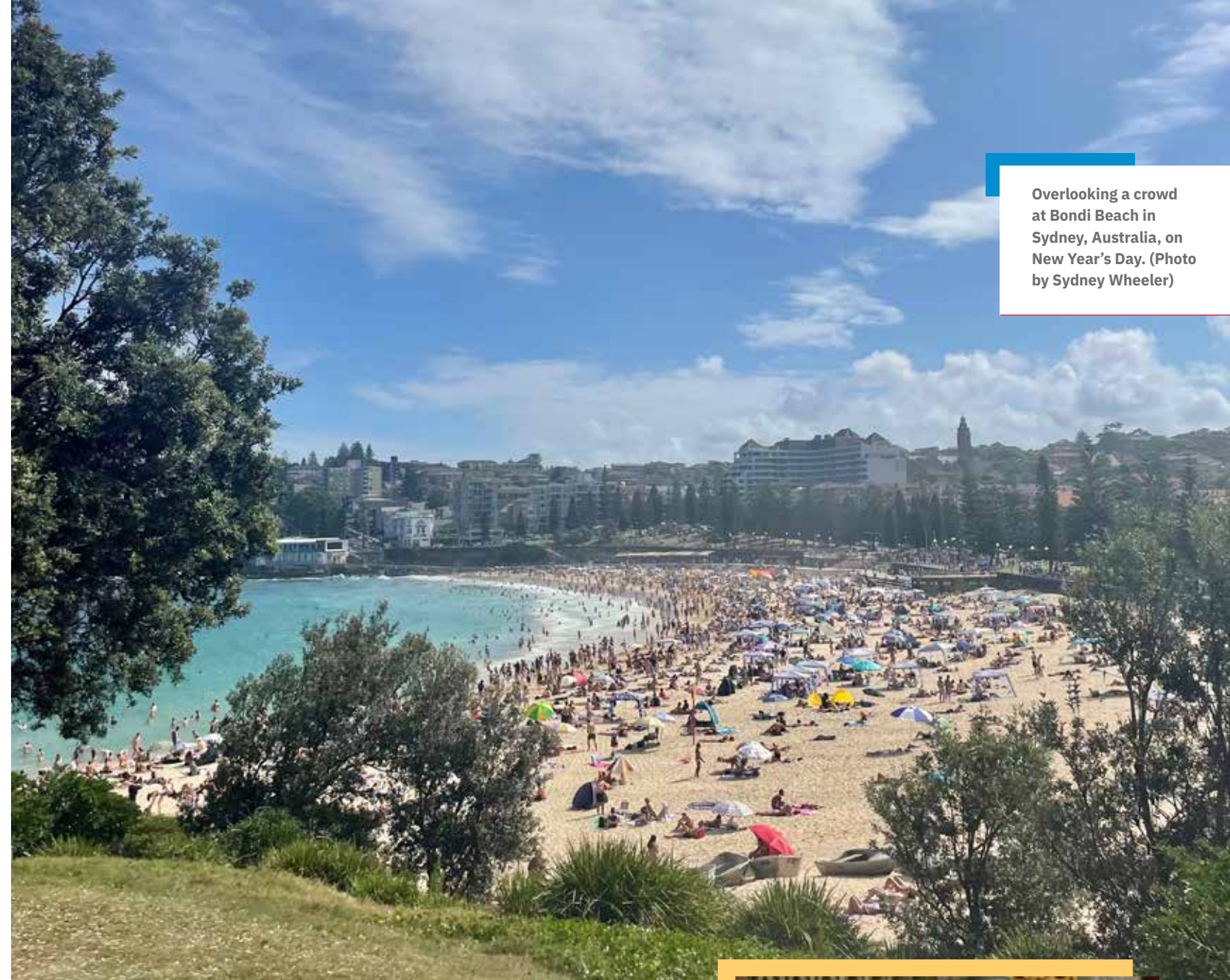


Visit riverbendblooms.com or follow @river.bend.blooms on Instagram to enjoy more photos.

Sydney Wheeler's family flower farm: River Bend Blooms in Scottsville, Kentucky. The farm features two Airbnbs, workshops, bouquet subscriptions, and wholesale and retail flowers. When Wheeler isn't hitting the books or country-hopping around the world, she is helping her mom, Michelle Wheeler, owner of River Bend Blooms. The flower farm is closed to the public, but 9 acres are designated as The Flower Fields, where the public can visit and take pictures. (Photos by Michelle Wheeler)



Locking eyes with a female Asian elephant at the Chai Lai Orchid Elephant Sanctuary outside Chiang Mai, Thailand. (Photo courtesy Sydney Wheeler)



Overlooking a crowd at Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia, on New Year's Day. (Photo by Sydney Wheeler)



Trying some authentic Vietnamese street food in an alley in Hanoi. (Photo courtesy Sydney Wheeler)

family's flower farm, River Bend Blooms, about 25 miles outside of the city.

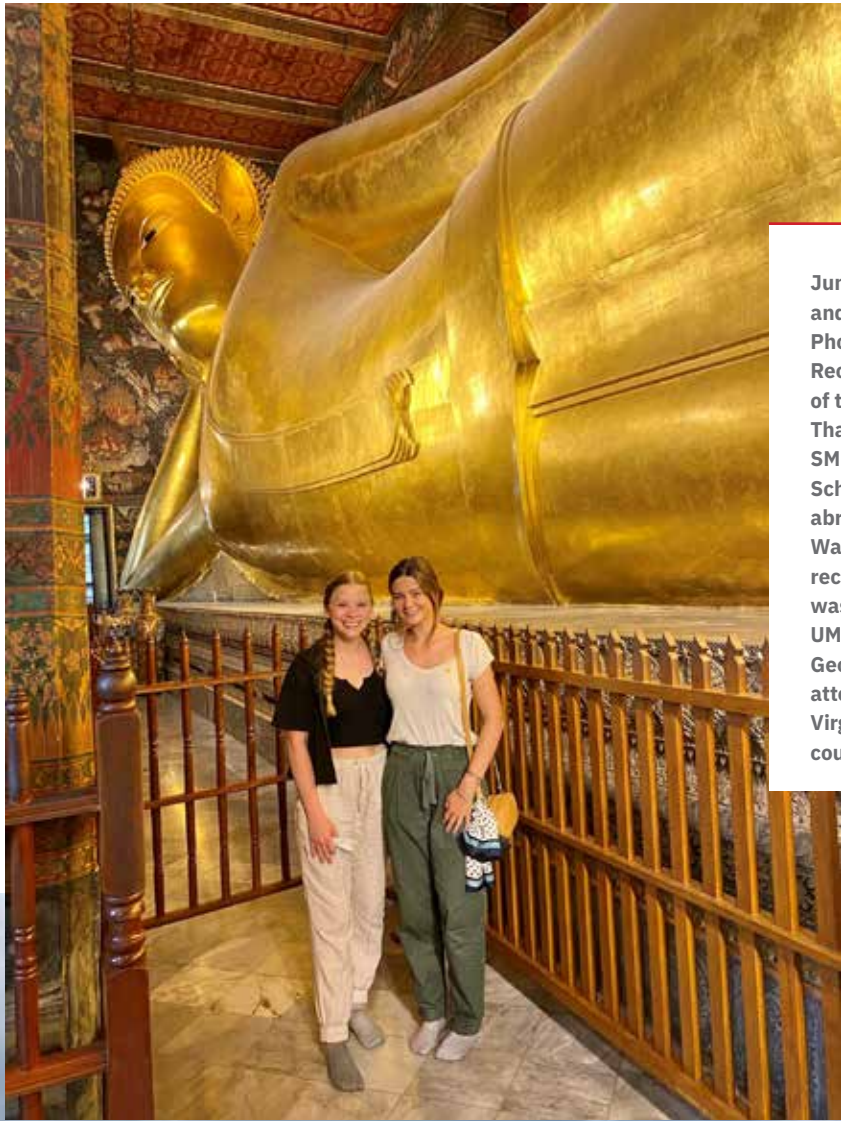
This past May, she successfully defended her honors thesis, "Effects of Cannabichromene on Pain and Neuroinflammation in HIV-Tat Transgenic Mice," under the direction of Nicole Ashpole, associate professor of pharmacology and research

associate professor in the Research Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences. This fall, Wheeler started medical school at Washington University in St. Louis with a full-tuition scholarship.

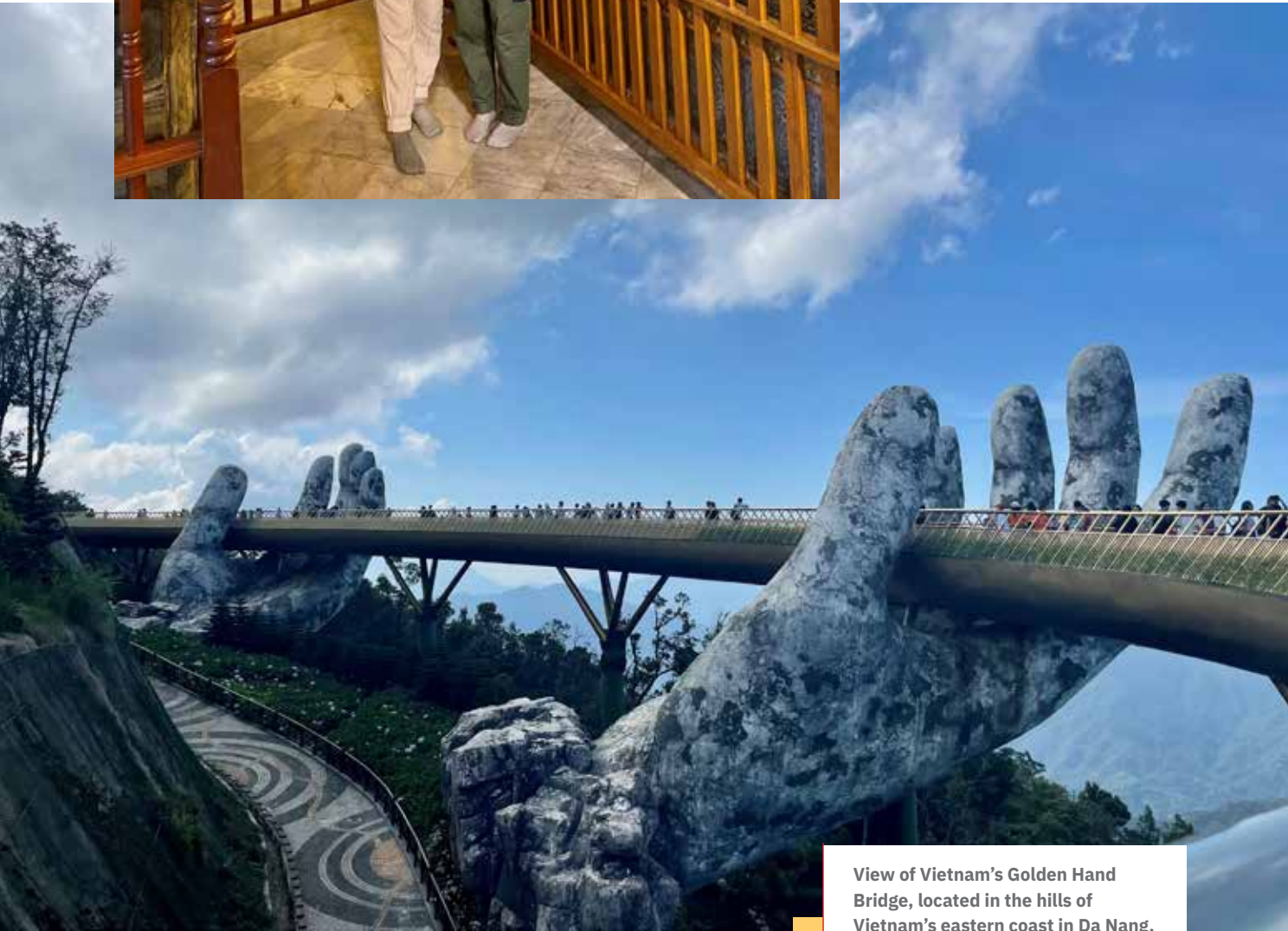
Over the course of last year alone, Wheeler visited five countries, and her travel was covered by her enrichment funds available to her as a

Stamps Scholar. At the end of her freshman year in 2020, she shared, "One of the most meaningful aspects of Stamps to me is the individualism and independence the program encourages. There's no pressure to fit into a mold of a 'Stamps Scholar' because there is intentionally no mold; we're all different, diverse in our backgrounds, passions and pursuits, but united by our vision and drive."

Editor's Note: As a freshman in Hon 101 in the fall of 2019, Sydney and her classmates wrote their final papers in letter form about what really matters in the end. Sydney's entire paper is a



June 2022. Maggie Walker and Sydney Wheeler at Wat Pho, or the royal Temple of the Reclining Buddha, in front of one of the largest Buddha statues in Thailand. Walker is also a 2023 SMBHC graduate and Stamps Scholar, who took many trips abroad with Wheeler. At UM, Walker founded Period@UM, received the Taylor Medal and was inducted into the 2023 UM Hall of Fame. A Suwanee, Georgia, native, she is now attending the University of Virginia School of Law. (Photo courtesy Sydney Wheeler)



View of Vietnam's Golden Hand Bridge, located in the hills of Vietnam's eastern coast in Da Nang. (Photo by Sydney Wheeler)

masterpiece, but here are her thoughts on family and home:

"We're all born into a biological lineage, but you get to choose what family means to you. Surround yourself with those who give you encouragement to be your most authentic self and make your home(s) with those people and in those places where you feel most loved. Whether you were born into the family you need or you create it yourself, cherish

and cultivate it. Family, in whatever form, matters. People matter. In the end, it will not be medicine, science, money or material that comforts you. It will be the people with whom you made homes that you will want to see you off into whatever it is that comes next."

Sydney, thank you for being a member of the Honors College family. **HR**



Sydney Wheeler, standing in front of the Parthenon on the Acropolis during a trip to Greece and Italy using her Stamps enrichment funds. (Photo courtesy Sydney Wheeler)

2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS



Honors Senate

The Honors Senate presented almost \$700 to the Boys & Girls Club of North Mississippi after raising the money through its annual \$5 Feast on Nov. 9.

On Feb. 18, the Honors Senate hosted over 800 students at the annual Honors College Formal at The Lyric on the Oxford Square. (Photo courtesy Sepp Cecil)

03
23

The Honors College hosted the annual Chancellor's Scholars Day and welcomed Stamps Scholar prospects to campus to learn more about UM, the Honors College and the opportunities awaiting them. New Stamps Scholar and honors freshman **Matelyn Hill** visited with

Norris "EJ" Edney, former assistant vice chancellor for diversity and inclusion, in The Great Room at the opening reception. Hill is seeking a B.F.A. in acting for the stage and screen and looks forward to immersing herself in UM's theatre community as well as engaging with youth through theatre workshops in Lafayette County. She hopes to use some of her Stamps enrichment funds to travel to England, where she'd love to gain experience at the London National Theatre. (Photo by HG Biggs)



2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS



The second annual SMBHC Poster Symposium took place on March 3 and featured undergraduate research by 24 honors students. **Judge Tamika Montgomery-Reeves** (right) (SMBHC 03) of the U.S. Court of Appeals, 3rd Circuit, shared her story and wisdom before attendees mingled with our symposium participants. **Edith Marie Green** (pictured above) answered questions about her honors capstone, "At the End of Life: Conceptualizing Human Dignity and Assisted Suicide Debates in Contemporary Germany," under the direction of Joshua First, Croft associate professor of history and international studies. Green is now a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's School of Medicine and Public Health, pursuing a Ph.D. in population health. (Photos by HG Biggs)



04
23



The SMBHC and Office of National Scholarship Advisement took part in UM's Mississippi Day on April 15. Many honors ambassadors were on hand to talk with prospective students, their families and visitors from around Mississippi. Pictured from left: **Morgan Whited**, **Ben Oliver**, **HG Biggs**, **Byron Swetman**, **Camia White**, **Racheal Embry**, **Meredith Whited** and **Catherine Page**. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)

2023 GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Jilkihah BRYANT



A LEGACY OF DEVOTION, RESILIENCE AND SERVICE

By Vivian Ibrahim

A public health and health sciences major from Macon, Jilkihah Bryant's commitment to serving others began in 2017 when she helped a local church find volunteers to cook and distribute food to the surrounding community on biweekly Saturdays.

Working in combination with her school's leadership and the church, she was able to recruit and transport students to volunteer sites. This first service experience emboldened her to expand Project Powerful, an organization aimed at improving community engagement among high school students in Mississippi.

"I grew up feeling like I had one shot at something, and I had to do it perfectly," Bryant said. "I had a mentor that was also my fourth-grade gifted teacher, Mrs. Hughes, and she said to always make sure you make yourself look good. This stuck with me. I treated school like work, I didn't do anything else for the longest time."

Bryant worked to expand Project Powerful after enrolling at the University of Mississippi in 2019 and continued even after the university shifted to online classes during the COVID-19 lockdown.

She designed an online tutoring platform aimed at second through 12th graders who required academic support. She also led programming efforts in the Project Powerful Service Advocate Program, which was designed to mobilize young people to give back to their communities, connecting them to one another and helping them alleviate pressing issues.

To date, Project Powerful has helped host more than 20 service projects in eight different locations in the state.

Bryant is active in several on-campus organizations. She was one of the inaugural area coordinators for the Office of Community Engagement, now the Center for Community Engagement,



Jilkihah Bryant (Submitted photo)

helping to coordinate health and wellness community partnerships.

Later, she was chosen to be the undergraduate director at CCE, where she played an integral role in the development of opportunities for students, faculty and staff to engage in community-based learning. She has worked to develop long-term models for the ambassador program while also mentoring and educating her team of six coordinators in overseeing 74 different community partnerships.

Since the first semester of her freshman year, Bryant has also served as an innovation scholar with the Grisham-McLean Institute's Catalyzing Entrepreneurship and Economic Development initiative. The CEED initiative works with students to develop actionable partnerships with Mississippi communities that increase entrepreneurship and promote economic development in rural communities.

Welcoming all to the Honors College commissioning ceremony on May 10 at the Sandy and John Black Pavilion at Ole Miss, Jilkihah Bryant quoted Toni Morrison: 'When you get these jobs that you have been so brilliantly trained for, just remember that your real job is that if you are free, you need to free somebody else. If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else.' Bryant added, 'It is not enough for us to simply succeed on our own, we must lift up those around us.' (Photo by HG Biggs)



Jilkiah Bryant poses with her 2022-23 Hall of Fame plaque after the Who's Who and Hall of Fame ceremony. The following week, she successfully defended her honors thesis, 'Black Male Educator Shortage in Mississippi Public School Systems: Impact, Challenges, and Intervention Strategies,' under the direction of Albert Nylander, professor of sociology and director of the Grisham-McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement. (Photo by Thomas Graning)

Jilkiah Bryant attends the 45th anniversary celebration of Truman Scholars at French Ambassador Philippe Étienne's Kalorama residence in September 2022. (Photo courtesy Truman Foundation)



"When I originally arrived here, I was put off by Ole Miss' negative connotations; my plan was to transfer after freshman year, but when I joined CEED, I knew I had to stay," Bryant said. "It made me understand how much of an impact I could have on my state and how much more I needed to learn."

"At CEED, I learned about communities like the one I grew up in. I learned to engage and uncover a side of myself from my childhood that I was unaware of. I realized that my experiences were different from others, but that I could make an impact."

As a CEED scholar, she demonstrated her commitment to public health in underserved Mississippi communities by co-organizing the Bilingual Community Health Fair in Pontotoc. She helped assemble a broad coalition of partners from campus and the community, including the Chamber of Commerce, dental and mental health providers, legal services, a food pantry and the area agency on aging.

Outdoors, in the July heat, the first Pontotoc bilingual health fair served more than 250 people and administered COVID shots and wellness assessments. The team had people helping with

I HAVE LEARNED SO MUCH FROM WORKING ALONGSIDE JILKIAH AS A COLLABORATOR, CO-PRESENTER AND CO-AUTHOR AS OUR PROJECTS HAVE DEVELOPED OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS.

JILKIAH LEAVES A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE AND HOPE.

LAURA MARTIN

SNAP applications and nutrition education. It also organized activities for children and a Mexican dance group performance.

The health fair was such a resounding success that the coalition of Ole Miss and community partners repeated it in Oxford in fall 2021 with the NAACP.

This spring, Bryant and her community and campus partners presented their work at the Southeastern Conference on Linguistics. The presentation showed others how to replicate community health projects and will be published.

"I have learned so much from working alongside Jilkiah as a collaborator, co-presenter and co-author as our projects have developed over the past four years," said Laura Martin, M Partner director and associate director at the Grisham-McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement. "Jilkiah leaves a legacy of excellence and hope."

Bryant's commitment to public service, drive, passion and resilience led her to being named a 2022 Harry S. Truman Scholar for the state of Mississippi.

"The Truman Scholarship gave me permission," Bryant said. "It gave me permission and freedom to think about how I want to show up and impact the world. It helped me understand that I wasn't alone."

"I met this cohort that cared about the world in the same way that I did, but they also recognize the challenges that are in place."

For Bryant, the Truman community, which calls itself the TruFam, gave her a place to be grounded and still be challenged by people.

"They are a reminder that the work I did throughout college is very important to me," she said. "Even if I don't do the same work in the future, I want to impact people in the world. I believe my TruFam will continue to remind me that I can do more and be more."

Bryant continues to work to better the

community around her. For her Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College thesis, she conducted research on Black male teacher representation in Mississippi. She interviewed seven superintendents and conducted surveys with principals in the state.

"You can count on Jilkiah to ask the critical question to push the conversation deeper theoretically, but she is always prepared to offer practical solutions," said Albert Nylander, Bryant's thesis adviser, director of the Grisham-McLean Institute and professor of sociology.

"Her thesis highlighted the need for the state to implement solutions in preparing K-12 teaching opportunities for underserved groups, especially Black males."

"Through Jilkiah's research and service, she has demonstrated what is possible when university students combine their lived experiences and passions to create a better world."

A 2023 inductee to the university's student Hall of Fame, one of the highest honors given to Ole Miss students, Bryant gave the welcome address on May 10 at the Honors College commissioning ceremony.

Hall of Fame inductees were selected by a committee in accordance with policy developed by the Associated Student Body. Selections are based on outstanding contributions in all aspects of campus life.

This summer, Bryant worked for the Weitzman Institute in Washington, D.C., as a health policy analyst intern.

"I want to leave a legacy of devotion, resilience and service; these are my core values," Bryant said. "When I decide to do something, I put my all into it. I am resilient in the process, and I trust that the service I do actually matters." [HR](#)

This story originally appeared in the University of Mississippi's 2023 Journey to Commencement series. Overall, more than nine honors alumni and graduating seniors were featured, and you can read their stories by visiting journey.olemiss.edu.

2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS



On April 19, honors students **Ross Cohen** and **Minahil Iqbal** curated a wonderful fifth annual SMBHC Spring Art Showcase that included artwork by members of the Oxford High School Art Club. Attendees enjoyed performances by **Bruce Levingston**, the Chancellor’s Honors College Artist in Residence and Holder of the Lester Glenn Fant Chair, as well as honors students **Izzy Arthurs**, **Vasilios Tidwell** and **Micaela Shields**, along with a film by **Than Clayton**. Back row, from left: **Izzy Arthurs**, **Vasilios Tidwell**, **JonTae McCall**, **Than Clayton**, **Tucker Bridgers** and **Madelyn Parsons**. Front row, from left: **Sarah Basha**, **HG Biggs**, **Micaela Shields**, **Bruce Levingston**, **Minahil Iqbal**, **Ross Cohen**, **Angel Morgan**, **Katherine Tschumper**, **Sariyah Coleman**, **Bre’Anna Coleman** and **Lilian Henry**. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)

EVENTS

INTRODUCTION

ROSS COHEN AND MINAHIL IQBAL

FOREWORD • PIANO SOLO

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE BRUCE LEVINGSTON

~

"IVY" • "LONG TIME COMING" • "ONE DAY"

IZZY ARTHURS | VOCALS + GUITAR

"THE TUBA AS A SOLO INSTRUMENT"

VASILIOS TIDWELL | TUBA

"OXFORD: A PLACE FOR ART"

THAN CLAYTON | FILM

ETUDE IN C-SHARP MINOR, OP. 2 NO. 1

MICAELA SHIELDS | PIANO

~

CLOSING • THANKS

ROSS COHEN AND MINAHIL IQBAL

FEATURED ARTISTS

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

SARAH BASHA
HG BIGGS
LYDIA BLAIR
BRE'ANNA COLEMAN
LANEY CORNELIUS
LILIAN HENRY
JON'TAE MCCALL
ANGEL MORGAN

~

OXFORD HIGH SCHOOL

TUCKER BRIDGERS
SARIYAH COLEMAN
ANNIKA DANIELS
KATLYN HILLIARD
MADELYN YAHIEL PARSONS
PASCAL PARSONS
KATHERINE TSCHUMPER
MEREDITH WALKER



Dean Ethel Scurlock presents the Barksdale Award trophy to Clark Etzel. (Photo by HG Biggs)

Clark Etzel wins 2023 Barksdale Award, co-authors study in *Nature Water*

A public policy leadership major minoring in English, Spanish and economics, Clark Etzel (SMBHC 24) used his \$5,000 Barksdale Award to spend a portion of summer in Italy studying the public policies of cultural heritage preservation at six cultural heritage sites. Etzel anticipates using his time abroad as the basis for his honors thesis under the direction of Christian Sellar, professor of public policy leadership, who wrote, “Clark has amply demonstrated entrepreneurial skills; he has a solid grasp of academic research from both author and journal editor standpoints; and ... he is preparing his Barksdale Award research with a thoroughness I would expect in a Ph.D. candidate planning fieldwork research overseas.” Upon being notified of his big win, Etzel shared, “I am honored and excited to have been selected for such a wonderful opportunity. Thank you to the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College for offering such a unique chance to create my own personalized learning experience and to my recommenders for assessing my proposal and aiding me on this journey.” Last May, Etzel co-authored a study in *Nature Water*. Erica

Walker, a Brown University epidemiologist who led the research, contacted Stephanie Otts, director of the National Sea Grant Law Center and senior research counsel at the Mississippi Law Research Institute, for assistance. Otts asked Etzel, who worked for the National Sea Grant Law Center as a research assistant in 2022, to take charge of the research under her supervision. The article in *Nature Water* analyzes “the correlation between boil water notices and absences in the Jackson Public School District” (Clara Turnage for UM News, May 3, 2023). [HR](#)

HG *Biggs*

BY KAYLA VONBURG-KING

You know that feeling when you look at someone and think to yourself, “Wow, they are going to be a big deal someday”? That’s exactly how I feel when I look at HG Biggs, an SMBHC Chinese major who hails from Jackson.

I first met HG when she interviewed to be an Honors College ambassador in spring 2022. My initial impression of her was that she was passionate about the Honors College, down-to-earth and very humble. As an ambassador, I have gotten to watch her flourish in her role; every family leaves one of HG’s tours absolutely glowing. She even led our first-ever virtual tour of the Honors College on Instagram Live, an initiative we began to make our program more accessible.

What I did not realize at the time was that HG was a very talented photographer. HG spent two and a half years as a photojournalist for *The Daily Mississippian*, covering community and campus events such as the Thacker Mountain Radio Hour, Oxford Pride Parade, College Panhellenic Bid Day and RebelTHON. She covered a story on police

brutality in Jackson, and her photos were featured in AP and *The New York Times*. She even spends a considerable amount of time with Ole Miss Athletics, capturing moments of various football and baseball games. She was the only female photographer to capture the Egg Bowl in 2021.

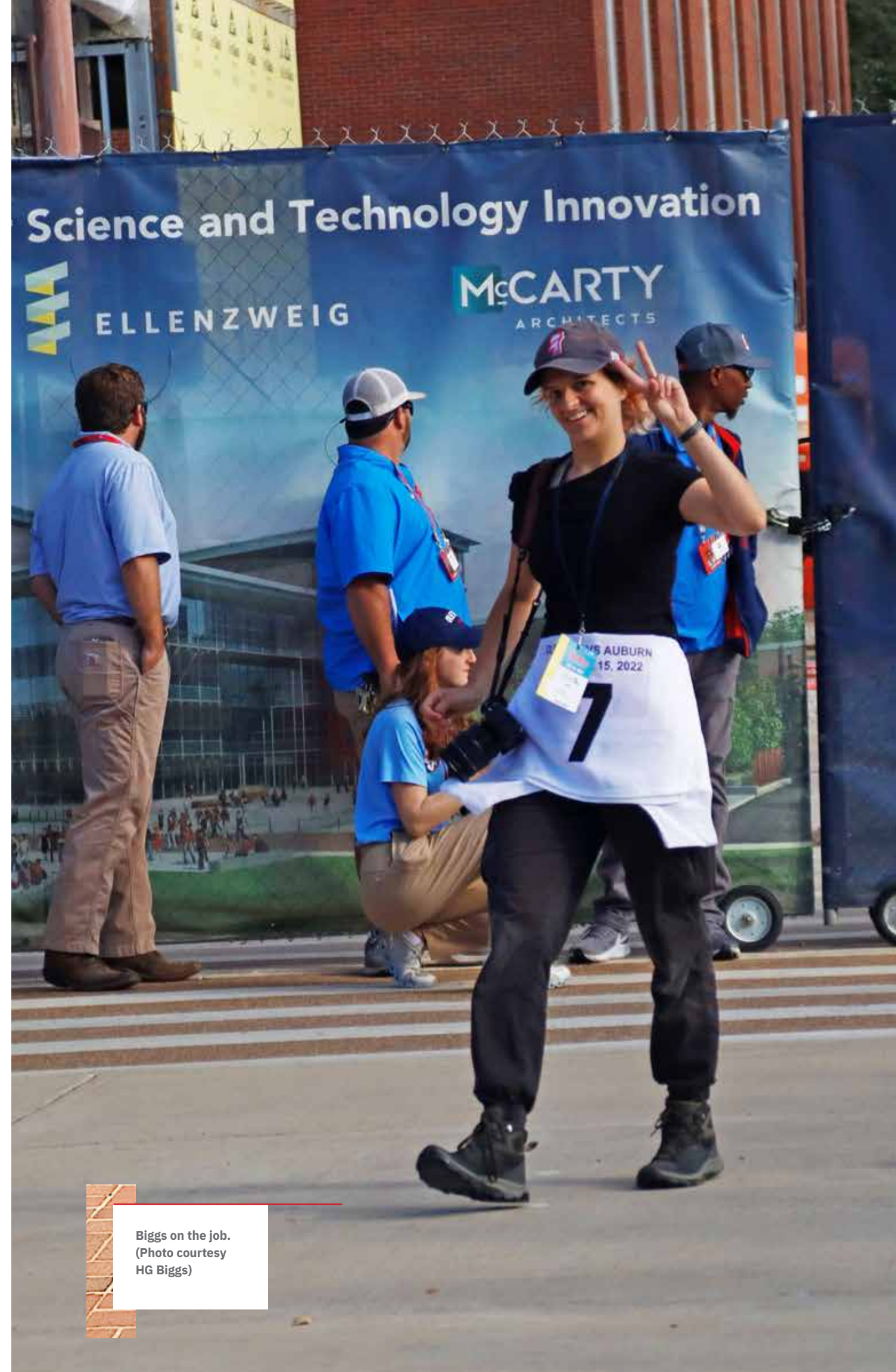
We had the idea to begin contracting HG to take photos of various Honors College events in the past year. HG happily accepted, and she has captured so many memories for us, including the SMBHC 25th Anniversary Silver Gala, our Undergraduate Research Poster Symposium, commissioning and the Dr. John Winkle Reading Room dedication. Her photos of Dr. Winkle’s room dedication are especially important to us as they are some of the last photos we have of him before his passing in October 2022.

She has been with us for so many of our department’s milestones and memories, effortlessly documenting with a keen eye and unwavering commitment to visual storytelling. In fact, in this very publication, I would guess at least three quarters of the photos in this year’s report were

HER WORK BEHIND A LENS CAPTURES LIFELONG MEMORIES
THAT ARE TREASURED FAR BEYOND BEING TAKEN.

**THE SCOPE OF HG’S PORTFOLIO
BRINGS ATTENTION TO THINGS
THAT MATTER MOST.**

BYRON SWETMAN



Biggs on the job.
(Photo courtesy
HG Biggs)

captured by HG. It is hard to put into words how well she is able to capture the smallest of moments of us, literally milliseconds of time. Fellow honors ambassador Byron Swetman (SMBHC 25) said it best: “Her work behind a lens captures lifelong memories that are treasured far beyond being taken. The scope of HG’s portfolio brings attention to things that matter most.”

After an event I planned for our incoming cohort of Stamps Scholars, HG sent me the photos she took that night, and I remember saying to HG that, one day, she would be one of those photographers who could charge thousands of dollars for her work. She simply replied, “I’ll never charge more. I want my work to be accessible to everyone.” I

Biggs captures a group selfie at the Honors College’s 25th Anniversary Gala. Front row, from left; Kayla VonBurg-King, Ally Watrous, HG Biggs and Helen Phillips; back row, from left: Morgan Whited, Eva Kiparizoska, Nya Thompson, Tina Truong, Janelle Minor, Ben Oliver and Byron Swetman. (Photo by HG Biggs)



was stunned, but those words are indicative of her character and her philosophy as a photojournalist.

In her farewell letter to *The Daily Mississippian*, she wrote that the most important thing for a photojournalist to remember is to never pursue stories for the clout or to add to a resume.

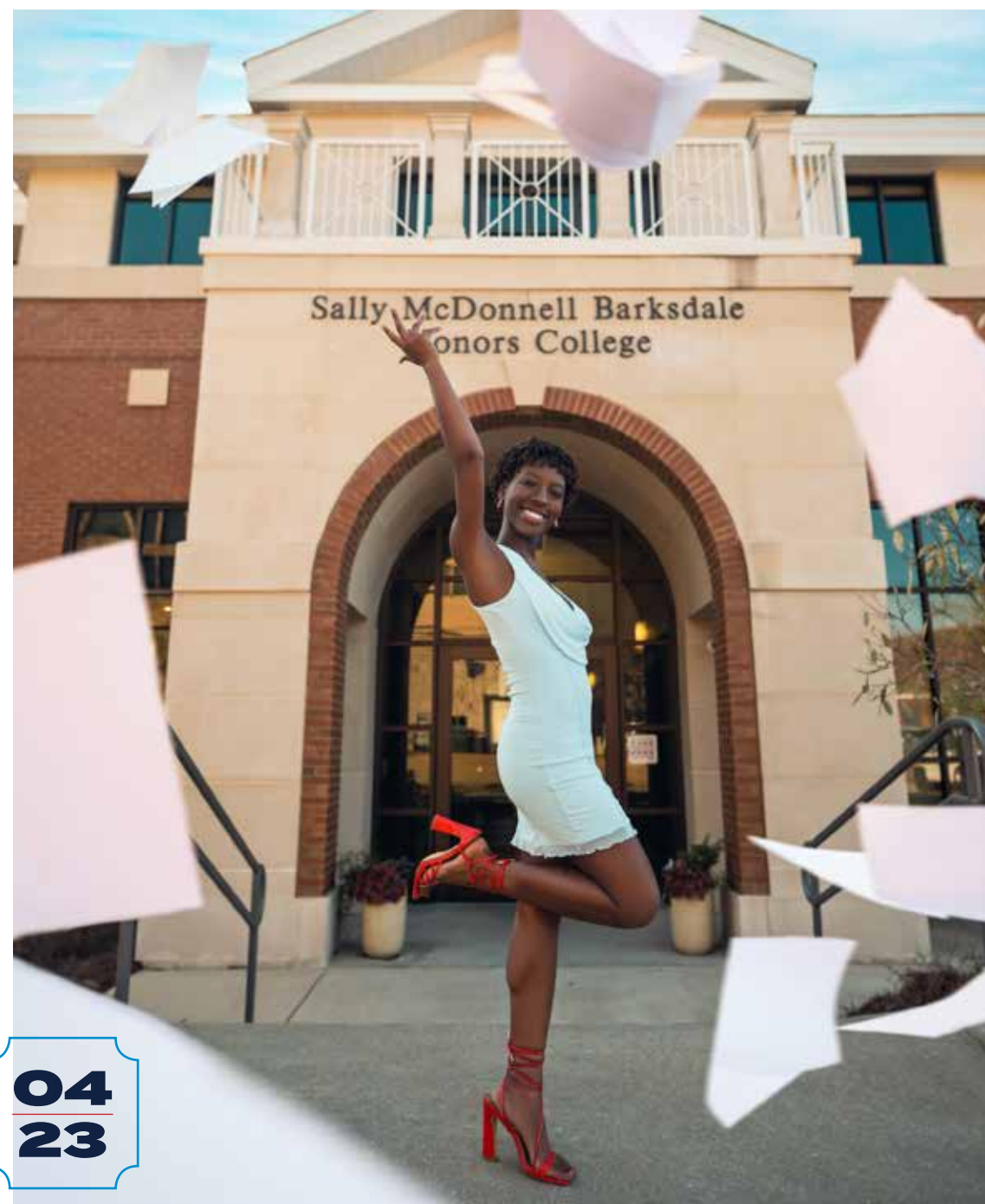
“You, and those you photograph, are humans first,” she wrote. “The second you forget that, you lose the most important aspect of being a good photojournalist.”

This summer, HG took on another challenge — interning as a photojournalist for *The Chautauquan Daily* in Chautauqua, New York. This coming academic year, you can catch her again on the field in the Vaught or Swayze Field as an intern for Ole Miss Athletics Communications.

I get to meet a lot of cool students in my role, truly, and I am incredibly lucky to have crossed paths with HG. Without a doubt, we will be seeing big things from her in the next years. **HR**

Kayla VonBurg-King (SMBHC 19) is the Honors College’s coordinator of admissions and oversees the honors ambassadors’ recruiting, training and programming.

2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS



April in the Honors College is known as “thesis season,” and many of our thesis defenders enjoy capturing a celebratory moment in front of the building. **Te’Keyra “Teekee” Shelton** graduated with a bachelor’s degree in multidisciplinary studies with emphases in Spanish, political science and sociology. During her time at the university, Shelton was a Luckyday Scholar, Ronald E. McNair Scholar and was the first recipient of the Mark V. Frezzo Human Rights and Social Justice Award. She was a dedicated member of Blacks in Political Studies and Grove Grocery, and she also served as an orientation leader and writing tutor for the University of Mississippi’s Writing Center. She completed and successfully defended her honors thesis, “The Past Close Behind Us: A Comparison of Anti-Integrationists’ Rhetoric from the 1960s with Anti-Critical Race Theory Rhetoric Today,” under the direction of James M. Thomas, associate professor of sociology. Shelton anticipates spending a few years as a flight attendant before returning to academic research. (Photo by Digital Mentality)

Congratulations to the professors who won a 2023 summer stipend to create an honors course. The course development awards range from \$2,500 to \$5,000 each, and the courses will be offered to honors students at some point over the next four semesters.



Hannah Allen
(Photo by Thomas Graning)

Survey-Based Research to Address Pressing Public Health Issues

Hannah Allen, assistant professor of health, exercise science and recreation management

This is an introductory methods course focusing on the utility of survey-based research to answer pressing public health questions. Students will develop and implement a research study from beginning to end as they select a topic area, complete a literature review, develop research aims, design a survey instrument, get study approval from an ethics board, and collect, analyze and interpret survey data. The project completed during this course can be used as an honors thesis project. Students can work with Allen after the course is completed to refine and expand on their project to meet honors thesis requirements. Students may also present this research at conferences or even publish their work.



Kris Belden-Adams
(Submitted photo)

Pablo Picasso

Kris Belden-Adams, associate professor of art history

Love him or hate him, Pablo Picasso is an artist with whom every other art maker has had to contend. He shifted artistic styles as frequently as he notoriously changed his wives/lovers, revolutionized modern art and became the first millionaire artist during his lifetime. His relentless search for new problems to solve has made him a model for experiential creative learning, fearlessness and not being afraid to fail. A closer look at Picasso's life and work, however, also reveals LGBTQIA+ discourses, conflicted politics and a rich study of performative celebrity culture within the confines of the trope of the "artist genius." This course explores all of those things — and more. My classroom involves a two-way, active, interactive conversation with students about artworks and their various interpretations and possibilities. This approach is particularly impactful with Honors College students, who enjoy delving deeper into

the artworks and discourses surrounding them. The course will also include guest speakers and a field trip to Chicago.



Robert Colby
(Photo by Barrier Photography)

Creating the Constitution

Robert Colby, assistant professor of history

Whose voices count in our American democracy? How can the average person make their needs heard in an era in which money speaks loudly in politics? Does everyone's vote count equally? What authority should government have over the lives of individuals? Where are the dividing lines between national and state authority? How can private rights be protected from government overreach? What does a government owe to its citizens? And, critically, how do the legacies of American racial slavery interact with its democratic practices? All of these questions mark flashpoints in our current moment of political division. But they are also queries that have reverberated through American discourse since the moment of the nation's founding. Students who wish to understand

them in the present benefit from exploring their origins.

This course allows students to explore the roots of these American fractures and the ways in which they shaped the American constitutional order in a vibrant, active learning environment. The course is built around a role-playing simulation. Over the course of the term, each student in the class will assume the role of a specific delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1787. They will have unique perspectives on the structure of American government and a set of objectives for what ought to be in the Constitution, some of which are political, others of which are personal.

Acting as their assigned delegates, students embody and articulate the mentalities of large subsets of Americans and seek to build a government that addresses their perceived needs and desires. While delegates are aligned roughly in teams (or factions, as the game calls them), members have disparate goals and must constantly negotiate with one another and evaluate what course of action is mostly to result in the government they prefer.

In doing so, they weigh the relative value of trade-offs, explore the bounds of what is possible in a revolutionary moment, and experience the frustrations that come with having to compromise core elements of one's ideology. They see the diversity of thought that has always permeated the American democratic experiment — that even the relatively homogeneous "Founding Fathers" did not all believe the same things. They encounter firsthand the roots of contemporary divisions and emerge from the course better able to contemplate and address them in the present.



Vanessa Gregory
(Photo by Kevin Bain)



Jason Hoeksema
(Submitted photo)

Science Journalism in the Age of Misinformation

Vanessa Gregory, associate professor of journalism instruction

Jason Hoeksema, professor of biology

We are living in an era defined by science and our relationship to it. Every day yields new headlines about advances in artificial intelligence, the development of mRNA vaccines and the perilous implications of climate change. How can citizens sort through the barrage of scientific claims and findings? What role do journalists play in translating complex science to the public? And how do scientists communicate their research in ways that push back against a rising tide of

misinformation and distrust in the scientific process?

As an ecologist who has recently been the subject of high-profile media coverage of a controversy in his field, and as a journalist who has written for national magazines and is writing a popular science book proposal about collective animal behavior, we're uniquely qualified to offer an intellectually ambitious co-disciplinary course for honors students interested in science, narrative writing and/or how the media's coverage of science shapes society. This course could provide the inspiration and initial research opportunities that can serve as the groundwork for honors capstone projects.

Students will increase their scientific and media literacy, equipping them to navigate the world intelligently and to evaluate the information they encounter. We hope to get students excited about science and writing and to increase their confidence in both realms by expanding their knowledge of scientific subfields and introducing them to the thriving genre of science writing. Some writers likely to appear on the syllabus are Ed Yong, Merlin Sheldrake, Hope Jahren, Deborah Blum, John McPhee, David Quammen, Helen Ouyang and Brooke Jarvis.

A key component of the course will be to convey an understanding of the process of science, using two approaches. Readings on the history and contemporary practice of biology will help students understand that science is not a static set of facts but rather a dynamic and sometimes messy process, conducted by real people with life circumstances that can affect the process. Participatory visits in the laboratory and field with biology faculty will allow the students to experience the day-to-day of science, and to gain

a foundation of understanding in key areas including forest and soil ecology, conservation biology, and climate change. These visits will also allow the students to gain experience interviewing scientists effectively.



Stephen Fafulas
(Photo by Kevin Bain)

Engaging Latinx Languages and Communities in the U.S. South

Stephen Fafulas, associate professor of modern languages

This course will foster a community learning environment whereby students are prompted to analyze the growing Latinx communities in the U.S. South from a multidisciplinary perspective. Students will tackle issues such as: (1) educational achievements and opportunities; (2) migration and population studies; (3) language choices, health care access and the law; as well as (4) identity, ideology and cultural aspects of Latinx cohorts across the nation, particularly in the U.S. South. Course readings will highlight aspects of Latinx populations from disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, linguistics, health care, economics and politics.

The course will provide experiential learning opportunities through a variety of ways: (i) visits to local schools, churches and regional facilities, such as hospitals, to meet with stakeholders to learn about their experiences with the growing Latinx population; (ii) students will also be encouraged to conduct anthropological and sociolinguistic fieldwork, including observations and data collection with Latinx community members in English (and Spanish if the student has proficiency in that language). These opportunities will lead to the core course component that is a student-led project (individually or collaborative). Students will be encouraged to select a topic with an eye toward linking their professional development with a community-based project whenever possible. Students will receive training in conducting human-subjects research and data collection.

As part of the course, we will invite members from the University of Mississippi and key stakeholders from the community to offer invited lectures throughout the semester. This will also serve as an alternate plan should we not be able to travel to the site of a particular stakeholder during the semester. The course will culminate with a mini-conference including a roundtable discussion with invited specialists in the field. Students will present their final projects at this mini-conference. We will make the conference open to the public. Ideally, a number of these projects will turn into honors capstones.



Nathan Oakes
(Photo by Thomas Graning)

Policy Talks Seminar: AI, Narratives and Social Engineering

Nathan Oakes, project administrator II for the Center for Practical Ethics

What if a program could identify a hate group or terrorist cell before it had fully formed? What if a program could tell someone, with unprecedented certainty, how to tweak a marketing or political campaign for maximum impact? What if patterns within seemingly unrelated news stories could predict new concentrations of cancer diagnoses far sooner than public health professionals? Because of modern AI's ability to develop sophisticated methods for interpreting vast data, it may have the potential to act as a sort of social oracle. Companies and governments are already exploring this potential by examining the development of narratives over time, across media, and as influenced by private, business and governmental interests.

But what might such a predictive and interpretive power mean for us? Are there limits that should be placed on how narratives detected and generated via AI should be used, either by private companies or the government? If so, what are those limits and how could they be enforced? What are the ethical considerations that users, designers, computer scientists,

entrepreneurs and legislators should consider?

Our investigation will draw on many disciplines — from philosophy and political science to psychology and data science to law and journalism — to address this cutting-edge policy concern. We'll begin by focusing on ethical questions and learning about the science behind narrative artificial intelligence. We'll study the concept and components of narrative as well as how narratives carry psychological messaging about identity, value and action. We'll explore sociological and computer models for tracking societal narrative shifts and trends.

We'll consider an array of implications of this new technology, looking at the benefits and risks posed for our psychology, news, social media, national security, election security and marketing, as well as possible uses for individual health outcomes and public health analysis. Guest lecturers from many fields will allow students to ask detailed and probing questions of experts. Two site visits to a new technology company at Insight Park provide students with an inside look at cutting-edge research.

Through interdisciplinary study and research, the exploration of ethical questions and issues, and interaction with experts and entrepreneurs, students develop a deep understanding of the semester's topic and collectively explore what policies should be in place to guide the development and use of this new technology. Each student will select a particular focus area (e.g., health care) for the semester as a basis for a semester-long research project, culminating in a proposal for the best policy response on how to use, regulate and live with the power that AI narratives have over public discourse and attitudes. **HR**

2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS



Jason Ritchie, associate professor of chemistry and biochemistry, is the 2023 Elsie M. Hood Outstanding Teacher Award winner. Ritchie has been an integral part of the SMBHC for over 20 years. Whether he's leading a welcome week session on cupcake decorating, teaching honors students in general chemistry and Hon 101 and 102, snapping fun pictures of LOU community members, judging science fair competitions or advising honors theses, Ritchie is invested in UM and the SMBHC. Madison Thornton (SMBHC 21) speaks on behalf of many: "I had Dr. Ritchie for honors general chemistry I and II, and he is one of the best professors I've ever had! Dr. Ritchie is so kind and explains things so well, and he genuinely cares about his students and their success both in and out of the classroom. Additionally, I am still utilizing some of what I learned in his course in medical school now — especially acid/base chemistry. He is an absolute gem, and I am honored that I was able to experience his teaching!" (Photo by Srijita Chattopadhyay)

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Honors College Minority Engagement Council in spring 2023. (Photo by HG Biggs)

Honors College Minority Engagement Council

Year in Review

BY EDREI PEÑA

This year was exceptionally eventful for the Honors College Minority Engagement Council. We proudly celebrated two momentous milestones: the 60th anniversary of the University of Mississippi's integration and the 25th anniversary of our Honors College. In addition to these significant occasions, we experienced a substantial surge in our membership and event turnout, with an outstanding cohort of freshmen actively engaging in our diverse range of activities.

We kicked off the fall semester by participating in Honors Welcome Week with a painting event led by our co-president, Deshauna Lee Vaughn. Here, incoming freshmen were able to paint koi fish and gain insight into our organization's mission and purpose. We then participated in the Cross-Cultural Student Organization Fair where we had the opportunity to interact with a diverse group of new honors students.

Additionally, a beloved tradition unfolded with our annual postcard writing event, where we crafted over 100 heartfelt messages to prospective students. This tradition holds a special place in my heart, as I vividly recall receiving a postcard from Ajah Singleton during my own senior year of high school, an impactful gesture that ultimately influenced my decision to enroll in our esteemed Honors College.

In September, we collaborated with the Ole Miss Latin American Student Organization to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. Here we all played a traditional Mexican game of chance named Lotería and enjoyed delicious food from a local Hispanic-owned restaurant.

As a group, we attended "The Mission Continues: Building Upon the Legacy" signature event, where we delved deeper into the profound impact James Meredith has had on our community and thanked him for his courage. Deshauna and I also had the privilege of meeting Mr. Meredith in a private lunch with other campus student leaders.

In October, we participated in dinner and Honors Fall Convocation with our friends from the First-Gen Student Network. To conclude the fall semester, we continued our yearly custom of DiversiTree, where we decorated cookies and assembled the Christmas tree.

The spring semester kicked off with one of our most anticipated events, Dinner with the Dean.

Here we had the opportunity of listening and learning from our esteemed dean, Dr. Ethel Scurlock. As a tribute to Black History Month, we participated in a thought-provoking UM Slavery Tour.

2023-24 HoCoMEC Executive Board

President: **Azurea Curry**

Vice President: **Joy Faith Jennings**

Secretary: **Shiven Patel**

Social Media & Marketing Chair: **Emily Suh**

External Outreach Chair: **Jana Abdrabbo**

Internal Outreach Chair: **Aabha Mantri**

Events & Programming Chairs:

Minahil Iqbal & Jasmine Sanders

Community Service Chair: **Jana Abuirshaid**

Faculty Adviser: **Jennifer Parsons**

Past Presidents

Edrei Peña and **Deshauna Lee Vaughn**
(2022-23)

Kelly Li (2021-22)

Ajah Singleton (2020-21)

Nakiyah Jordan (2019-20)

Swetha Manivannan (2018-19)

In March, a select few members attended the Honors Silver Gala to express our gratitude to the Barksdale family and all our generous donors for their invaluable contributions to student opportunities. During this semester, our remarkable community service chair, Emily Lin,

successfully registered our group for the Big Event, providing our members with an excellent opportunity to serve the Lafayette-Oxford-University community and accumulate community service hours.

To wrap up the semester, we gathered for our traditional group photo and held an interest meeting for upcoming elections. It was a valuable occasion to inform our members about the various ways they could contribute to HoCoMEC and enjoy some pizza together.

Overall we've had an incredible year. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our cabinet and executive members for their unwavering dedication and hard

work in ensuring the successful execution of numerous events. I want to give a special shoutout to Deshauna, Brandon Ashmore, Joy Faith Jennings and Azurrea Curry for surpassing expectations and making it an absolute pleasure to work with them. I cannot wait to see the accomplishments of the new leadership and the future growth of this organization. HoCoMEC has provided me with a sense of belonging within the Honors College, and my hope is that it continues to serve as a home for other students, as well. **HR**

Edrei Peña graduated with degrees in international studies and Spanish and will be taking a gap year before pursuing a master's degree in public administration.



Attending 'The Mission Continues: Building Upon the Legacy,' the signature event honoring James Meredith and his contributions to the University of Mississippi are Brandon Ashmore (left), Kelly Li, Emily Lin, Edrei Peña and Azurrea Curry. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)

@UMHOCO_MEC



The Honors College Silver Gala. Tristan Tran (left), Edrei Peña, Brandon Ashmore and Joy Faith Jennings. (Photo by Bill Dabney)



HoCoMEC members gather in the Honors College for a fun night playing Loteria. (Photo courtesy HoCoMEC)

2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS

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On April 26, the Senior Dinner took place in the ballroom at The Inn at Ole Miss. (Photos by J. Worthem Photography and Design)



HONORS FELLOWSHIP

Recipients

BY JOHN SAMONDS, ASSOCIATE DEAN

Through the generosity of several benefactors, particularly the Barksdale family; Lynda Mead Shea and her husband, Dr. John Shea; and McCarty Architects, the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College proudly supports the endeavors of citizen scholars. From fall 2022 through summer 2023, the Honors College awarded over \$50,000 in fellowships to the 32 students listed below to support their experiences studying abroad or interning in various locations around the United States.

Grace Barrett, public policy leadership, general business, study abroad in Florence, Italy

Caroline Brock, public health, study abroad in Paris

Davis Bunn, public policy leadership, economics, internship with Fund for American Studies in Washington, D.C.

Faith Calvert, psychology, University of Mississippi Medical Center, January Shadowing Program 2023

Gavin Carr, Arabic, political science, study abroad in Meknes, Morocco, at the Arab American Language Institute, or AALIM

Bre'Anna Coleman, political science, study abroad in Barcelona, Spain

Katherine Dragna, dietetics and nutrition, UMMC July-August Shadowing Program 2023

Mary Catherine Drane, public policy leadership, public health and health services, Sullivan Foundation Summer Intercultural Leadership Program in Strasbourg, France

Brooklyn George, nutrition and dietetics, study abroad at Florence University of the Arts in Italy

Julia Hansen, biology, UMMC January Shadowing Program 2023

Edward Heinen, chemistry, Spanish, study abroad at St. Louis University, Madrid

Latoria Hicks, film production, internship with ECG Productions in Atlanta

Ashlyn Hinton, public policy leadership, integrated marketing communications, study abroad at Maynooth University, Ireland

Lee Holmes, international studies, Arabic, participation in the National Bureau of Asian Research Summer Seminar in Seattle

Madelyn Jarjoura, political science, Arabic, internship with Defense Intelligence Agency in Coral Gables, Florida

Daneel Konnar, public policy leadership, internship with Cogent Strategies in Washington, D.C.

Emilee Ly, integrated marketing communications, UMMC July-August Shadowing Program 2023

Sydney Lynch, classics, art history, International Security and Intelligence program at the University of Cambridge

Marissa Maatallah, psychology, study abroad at the University of Roehampton in London

Isabelle McGill, political science, study abroad in Florence, Italy

Lauren Mein, international studies, Spanish, study abroad at the University of Duesto in Bilbao, Spain

Rabria Moore, journalism, political science, study abroad in Legon, Ghana

Mary Patton Murphy, English, study abroad at Florence University of the Arts in Italy

Hemangi Patel, economics, study abroad at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona, Spain

Kresha Patel, international studies, study abroad at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona, Spain

Sullivan Briley Rakow, integrated marketing communications, study abroad at Florence University of the Arts in Italy

Miley Ray, international studies, study abroad in Urbino, Italy

Sydney Rehm, international studies, Arabic, study abroad in Meknes, Morocco, at AALIM

Bella Scutti, integrated marketing communications, Semester at Sea for spring 2023

Lane Taylor, physics, internship at Fermilab in Chicago

Lorne Turner, international studies, public policy leadership, study abroad at Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany

Abigail Wilbur, international studies, Spanish, study abroad at the University of Deusto in Bilbao, Spain



John Winkle

Days after dozens of loved ones gathered for his room dedication on the third floor of the Honors College, professor John Winkle unexpectedly died on Oct. 23, 2022. We mourn alongside his family and all who crossed paths with him.

Professor Winkle's impact on honors education at the University of Mississippi is undeniable and, in many ways, unquantifiable. However, we know he advised at least 23 honors theses, served on another 58 honors thesis committees, coordinated the Hon 101/102 faculty development meetings for years, taught Hon 101, 102 and several special topics courses for over 17 years and served as one of the co-creators of the original honors curriculum.

In the 2017 *Honors Report*, Winkle penned a story of his SMBHC experiences. He closed by writing: "I am a lifelong learner, and I hope to convey that joy to my students. As I reflect on my life, I might have been an architect or an attorney or, in the most secret of childhood fantasies, an outfielder for the Boston Red Sox. No doubt in those professions I would have continued to learn. But the learning there would arguably have never been as rich and as edifying as that of a university professor. Each and every Honors College class I teach reminds me that I made the right choice."

On Oct. 27, 2022, family, friends and colleagues gathered at Oxford University Methodist Church to celebrate the life and impact of Winkle. What follows is a eulogy delivered on that day by honors alumna Ann Lowrey Forster.



John Winkle speaks at his Honors College room dedication. (Photo by HG Biggs)

EULOGY FOR JOHN WILSON WINKLE III

BY ANN LOWREY FORSTER (SMBHC 06)

When Ellen (Meacham) was in touch this past weekend to let me know that we would too soon lose John, I was untethered. I went into a Faulknerian, Southern gothic wailing and mourning. I took to the bed. In the early part of the week, after John had died, I would tell friends when they asked about my puffy face, "Dr. Winkle, a beloved professor of mine, died unexpectedly." And it seemed odd to me that I was wracked with sobs for a man I kept referring to by his surname.

When Ellen was in touch to ask if I would represent John's students here today, I realized why I was untethered. It was because of that exact tension. For hundreds, if not thousands, John Winkle was that beautiful harmony of authority and friend.

And in that, he imaged his creator.

In 2002, I matriculated at Ole Miss, at John's beloved Honors College. He was an idea guy, and Dr. (Douglass) Sullivan-González, Dr. (John) Samonds and others had taken that idea and were running with it. I was an early recipient of their — and others' — determination to serve the students of Mississippi. When I was registering for classes, John Winkle's name popped up as having an Honors 101 section. My father suggested I take it — because he had had Dr. Winkle at Ole Miss 25 years before and declared him one of the best teachers of his life. I didn't like the time the class was and, at 18, didn't think my daddy really knew much.

But, in the spring of my freshman year, I was longing for Mock Trial. I had competed and loved it in high school and learned that there was a

national collegiate competition, but that Ole Miss didn't have a program. Daddy suggested I email John Winkle to help me get one started. And this time I listened.

And so, John and I began together. He didn't really know a lot about Mock Trial, but he just did the thing — because he had a student who was interested in doing it. And he loved it with me.

We formed a team. And in that, John taught me the beginnings of how to lead.

In the fall of my sophomore year, I did two things that changed my life forever. I got pregnant (accidentally — being 19 and unmarried) with my first child, and I enrolled in Dr. Winkle's Con Law class. In that, I had the best teacher I've ever had — and became a permanent teacher to my daughter.

For three years, John and I led the Mock Trial program together. He laughed and served — and stayed in awful hotels with us. He let us be young — but he

occasionally had one beer with us — and took joy in that moment where we let him into our youth.

John was not one to blur boundaries — always holding that godly tension of authority and friend. He managed to let us in without letting down the waterline of his own household. But being a single Mama gave me an "in" if you will, and Ellen entered my life.

John and Ellen nurtured and loved — and yet respected and never interfered. They recognized that I was a child and yet a mother, and they quietly expected me to grow up.

And when John expected something of you, you wanted to do it. So, I set about becoming an adult. And adults have people for supper. When my husband and I became engaged, we invited the Meacham-Winkles for supper. I made this old chicken pasta dish of my mother's, which is very good. When it is served hot. Unfortunately, with



In 2017, Professor Winkle wrote a story for the *Honors Report* commemorating the Honors College's 20th anniversary. He and some of his former students recreated a typical classroom scene for the story. From left: Lance Felker (MBHC 01), Savannah Smith (SMBHC 18), Kellie McClelland (SMBHC 17), John Winkle, Mitchell Redd (SMBHC 18), Eloise Tyner (SMBHC 17) and Kathryn James McGraw (SMBHC 17). (Photo by Thomas Graning)

all my swirling around trying to make my little apartment hospitable and grown-up, I put supper on the table quite cold. He saw that I was trying to do what he expected of me and that I needed encouragement to keep at it. He could have criticized or advised — instead he grinned and ate every bite and lied and told me it was so good. During my wedding preparations, we decided we would have only family. I had one of the larger wedding arguments with my mother about John and Ellen. I said, “Only family sounds good — except the Winkle-Meachams.” Mama said, “No. It will open

up a can of worms.” I said, “John and Ellen will be there.” I got my way very little during wedding planning with my mother, but that was one I won. John was my adviser for my Honors College thesis, and after I graduated, he became a consistent life adviser as well. I would write long emails processing through my various quarter-life crises. These were mostly self-indulgent, but he would always respond with the advice I was asking for. At one particular time, he responded with a long, exhortative and encouraging message. In it, he said:

DEDICATION OF THE JOHN WINKLE ROOM

On Oct. 14, dozens gathered to honor John Winkle, professor emeritus of political science and one of the original trailblazers of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College, at the John Winkle Room dedication. Honors alumni Rachel Donald (SMBHC 10) and J.R. Rigby (SMBHC 03) gave touching tributes to Winkle, and John Samonds, honors associate dean, shared impressive facts regarding Winkle's impact on honors education and honors students. We enjoyed remarks from Professor Winkle and loved celebrating the moment alongside his wife, adjunct instructional assistant professor of journalism and author Ellen Meacham, as well as his three sons, Johnny, Jason and Will. In 2021, an anonymous donor and Honors Program graduate gave \$100,000 to the SMBHC to name the study room in Winkle's honor and establish the Dr. Vaughn Grisham Experiential Learning Endowment.



The John Winkle Room. (Photo by HG Biggs)

“We, you and I, love to read and to think and to study and to read and to think some more. We are perennial students. We embrace the intellectual enterprise. I did not change who I am to become a college professor. I became a college professor because of who I am.”

John Winkle was willing to exhort, and yet he was always for me. Ellen remarked in his obituary that John had always lamented losing out on the title of “wittiest” in high school. But I know why he lost. Though he was a man of a quick and rapier wit, he was too earnest for “witty” to characterize him fully.

It was very difficult to disappoint John Winkle. Not because he was a relativist but because he was humble. It simply wasn't about him. It was about service to others — to the world he was given to serve. In this, John imaged his God yet again — and this time his savior.

I am a committed Presbyterian, so I know that one cannot work his way to heaven. But if one could, John would be a candidate.

Longfellow wrote a great poem called “A Psalm of Life,” and the last three stanzas represent what John Winkle was to his hundreds of students.

*Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;*

*Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.*

*Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.*

Why is John so great in the memories of his students who still remember him as Dr. Winkle? Why do we, when shipwrecked, look back and take heart? Why does his mere memory make me want to be up and doing for any fate? He was delightful and witty and bright and kind. But there was that something extra.

In that letter in which John was exhorting me, he ended with a sentence which I believe encapsulates what he gave each of us.

Ann Lowrey — I have the utmost confidence in you. I always have. John.

HR

REMARKS FROM DSG

John Winkle was a true colleague. He figured out how to befriend and cajole his colleagues while maintaining a critical distance from ideas or suggestions proffered. He thought carefully, worked to construct the needed historical context (or relevant precedent) and the required conceptual framework to reflect, agree, amend and disagree with the idea at hand. John worked hard to temper his passionate convictions to maintain open debate, and he deeply empathized with colleagues, staff and administrators.

I remember struggling to figure out how to deal with a high maintenance alum whose connections mattered deeply, and John assisted me in the gaming of two or three solutions to the challenge at hand. I never feared a formidable challenge knowing that John was but a phone call away.

John loved debate. I always depended upon his familiar knock, once a year, asking for support of the undergraduate debate team on campus. I always considered such support as part and parcel of the Honors College mission, but John never took the “ask” for granted. He entered the office, we shared some laughs about family and friends, and he inquired politely as if it were the first time to breach the subject of supporting the debate team. His unassuming character emerged out of his understanding of grace, mercy and justice.

John led the Honors 101 & 102 teams for several years as we all grew to meet the ever-evolving challenges of the SMBHC community. He built his successful teaching career with his heart focused on listening and his mind ever probing the boundaries of our deeply held values and institutions.

I miss John dearly.

I know confidently that more than one of John's students now marches forward with his legacy, sharing his thirst for knowledge and wisdom with the next generation of scholars.

Douglass Sullivan-González
Professor of history and former SMBHC dean

CELEBRATING

25

YEARS

OF HONORS

The University of Mississippi

Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College



Honors Fall Convocation

On Oct. 13, 2022, the Honors Fall Convocation celebrated 25 years of the Barksdale family’s generosity by featuring three successful SMBHC alumni: (1) Markeeva Morgan, vice president and program manager of VC-25B at Boeing; (2) Patrick Woodyard, Nisolo founder and CEO; and (3) Sarah Barch, poet and M.F.A. candidate at the University of Arkansas. (Submitted photos)



(4) Dean Ethel Scurlock and Gresham Hodges Meek (SMBHC 12). (Photo by Bill Dabney)

(5) George and Jan (University Scholars 75) Pilko with Brady Bramlett. (Photo by Bill Dabney)

(6) Jim Barksdale (Photo by HG Biggs)

(7) Douglass Sullivan-González (left), Lee Cohen and Bruce Levingston. (Photo by HG Biggs)

(8) Penny Leeton (left) and Elizabeth Payne, honors director of the McDonnell-Barksdale Honors College from 1997 to 2002. (Photo by HG Biggs)

Honors Silver Gala

On March 4, over 200 honors students, alumni, friends and special guests gathered in the Gertrude C. Ford Ballroom at The Inn at Ole Miss to celebrate 25 years of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College. We appreciate all, especially our sponsors, who made the evening possible and magical. Dean Ethel Scurlock welcomed everyone, and former dean Douglass Sullivan-González delivered the invocation. SMBHC alumni guest speakers were Tyler Craft (SMBHC 10), Daniel Roberts (SMBHC 14), Gresham Hodges Meek (SMBHC 12) and Dr. Marc E. Walker (SMBHC 06). Attendees enjoyed an honors tribute video produced by Sam McGlone and directed by Brad Gray. We also heard from Sepp Cecil, honors senate director, and Brady Bramlett, development director. More than 400 photos from the gala are available to view on our Facebook page.



Thank You

Silver Gala Sponsors

Presenting Level

Gift in honor of the Boys and Girls Club

Platinum Level

Lee Ann & Bill Fry
Jan & George Pilko

Gold Level

Gresham Jewelry
Bruce Levingston
Douglass Sullivan-González
Frances Sullivan-González
UM College of Liberal Arts
UM School of Education
UM School of Law
UM School of Pharmacy

Silver Level

Jan & Lawrence Farrington
Mary Ann & Don Frugé
Mary & Sam Haskell
Karen & Bruce Moore
Mary Sharp & Jim Rayner
Audra & Eddie Rester
UM Center for the Study of Southern Culture
UM Department of Music
UM Division of Outreach and Continuing Education
UM Office of the Chancellor
UM Office of the Provost
UM Overby Center for Southern Journalism and Politics
UM School of Engineering
UM School of Journalism and New Media

Bronze Level

Hope Mountain Counseling LLC
Ethel & Carlo Scurlock
UM Croft Institute for International Studies
Rhondalynne & Bruce Ware

HOLIDAY PARTY
Ambassador holiday party, December 2022. (Photo by Caroline Villemarette)



Honors ambassadors volunteer precious time to help high school students navigate the college selection process. Over the last academic year, honors ambassadors were critical to the Honors College's success and assisted the SMBHC with numerous events, including Saturday visit days, Chancellor's Scholars Day and Mississippi Day. Each year, the large group and members comprising the executive committee are guided by Kayla VonBurg-King (SMBHC 19), coordinator of admissions.



2022-23 EXECUTIVE BOARD
Kayla VonBurg-King (third from left) stands with her 2022-23 honors ambassadors executive board: Nya Thompson, Catherine Page and Ally Watrous. (Submitted photo)



2023-24 AMBASSADORS
Pictured is the 2023-24 team of honors ambassadors, numbering 54 honors students representing 13 states and 32 UM departments. Of the total, 54% are Mississippians, and they all engage in a variety of extracurricular endeavors. (Photo by Kayla VonBurg-King)



SATURDAY VISIT DAY
Caroline Villemarette (left), Helen Phillips, Racheal Embry, Janelle Minor and Marissa Skulsky at a Saturday visit day. (Photo by Kayla VonBurg-King)

HONORS Ambassadors

Pictorial Year in Review and Look Ahead



OPEN HOUSE
Top left, clockwise: Nya Thompson, Dillon Desai, Megan Hughes, Catherine Page, Ally Watrous, Shivani Shukla, HG Biggs and Madeleine Dotson working an open house for the SMBHC. (Photo by Kayla VonBurg-King)

2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS



Honors students swept the 2022-23 UM Hall of Fame! Back row, from left: **Kelly Li, Sepp Cecil, Rabria Moore, Preston McWilliams** and **Logan Thomas**. Front row, from left: **Preston Antes, Maggie Walker, Jilkiah Bryant, Andy Flores** and **Morgan Whited**. (Photo by Thomas Graning)

where are
YOU
now?

You're invited
to participate
in a two-
minute survey:



We want to
know more
about our
honors alumni!

Congratulations, Class of 2023



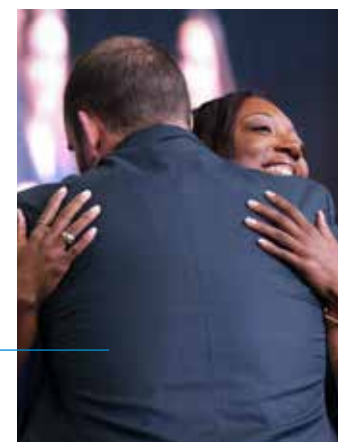
Dean **Ethel Scurlock** speaks at the Honors Commissioning Ceremony. (Photo by HG Biggs)

The Honors Commissioning Ceremony took place on May 10 at the Sandy and John Black Pavilion at Ole Miss. More than 100 photos from the ceremony are available on our Facebook page.



Indu Nandula embraces her honors capstone adviser, **Victoria Dickinson**, associate professor of accountancy. Nandula is now pursuing her Master of Accountancy and Data Analytics at the University of Mississippi. (Photo by HG Biggs)

Thomas Werfel, assistant professor of biomedical engineering, hugs his honors thesis student **Micaela Shields**, who graduated with a biochemistry degree with minors in biological science and music. Shields won the Dean's Prize, a special commemorative gift and a gift certificate to Square Books for earning the most honors hours — 58! — among the Class of 2023. She is attending medical school at UMMC on a full scholarship funded by the Barksdale family. (Photo by HG Biggs)



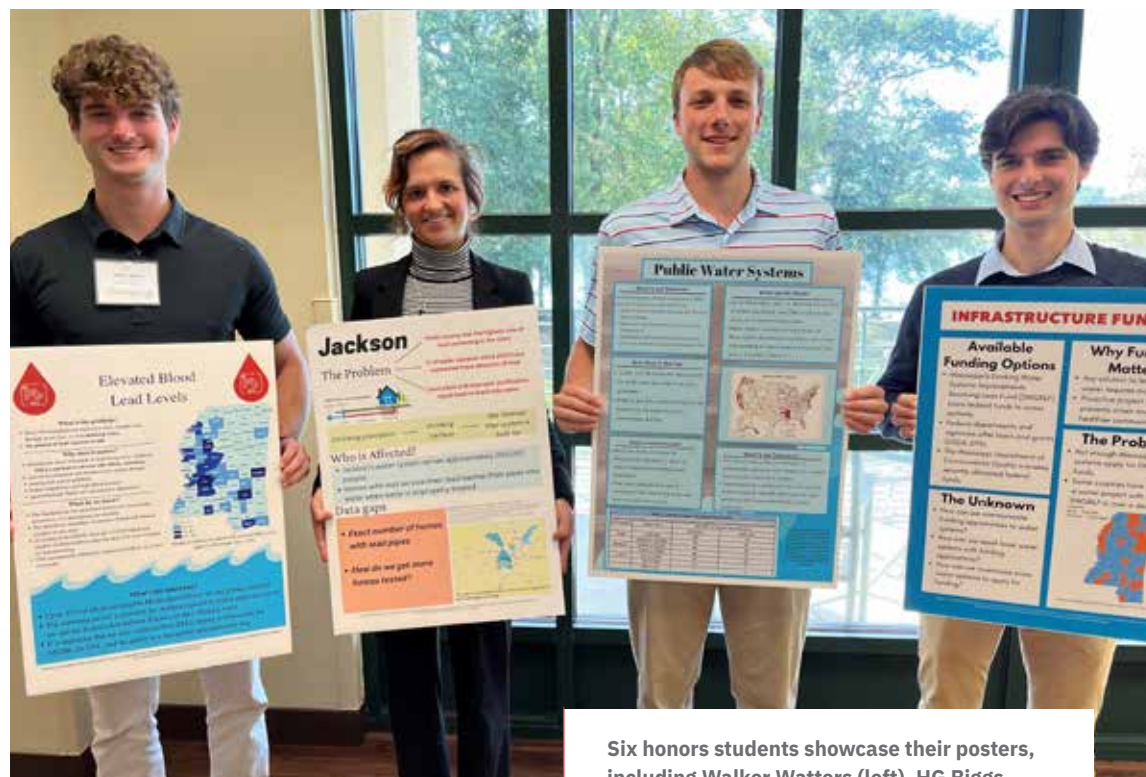
Among the platform party were student leaders and speakers. Back row, from left: **Sepp Cecil, Deshauna Lee Vaughn, Eva Kiparizoska** and **Catherine Page**. Front row, from left: **Jilkiah Bryant, Edrei Peña, Sarah Ryann Morgan Fortner** and **Andy Flores**. Fortner and Flores served as class marshals. Student groups were represented by Vaughn and Peña (HoCoMEC), Cecil (Honors Senate), Page (Honors Ambassadors) and Flores (First-Gen Student Network). Bryant gave an inspiring welcome. Kiparizoska delivered a heartfelt address. Cecil closed out the ceremony with a motivating charge. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)

A Thirst for Knowledge

HONORS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: DRINKING WATER QUALITY IN MISSISSIPPI & LEAD FORUM

During fall 2022, an honors course tackled the timely subject of water quality in Mississippi. Kristie Willett, chair of the Department of BioMolecular Sciences and professor of pharmacology and environmental toxicology, and Stephanie Otts, senior research counsel and director of the Sea Grant Law Program, co-taught Hon 420: Honors Experiential

Learning: Drinking Water Quality in Mississippi & Lead Forum. As noted in the course description, students had “focused, in-depth discussions of timely issues related to water. Students were informed of issues through reading scientific and nonfiction literature, videos and media reports chosen to challenge their analysis of current water policy and to engage their intellectual curiosity and community



Six honors students showcase their posters, including Walker Watters (left), HG Biggs, Christopher Buss and Clark Etzel. (Photo courtesy Kristie Willett)



Back row, from left: Christopher Buss, Walker Watters, HG Biggs, Clark Etzel and John Green. Front row, from left: Kristie Willett, Gabrielle Miller, Sarah Caroline Crall, Stephanie Otts and Shannon FitzGerald. (Photo by Alex Ritchie)

engagement. In addition, a number of outside speakers participated in the course to provide a variety of professional and community perspectives to the issues surrounding drinking water in Mississippi.

“Students received quality instruction in aspects of public, environmental and population health and policy, and conducted comprehensive risk factor analysis to identify the potential contribution of drinking water to elevated



Doctoral student Shannon FitzGerald (left), and honors students Sarah Caroline Crall and Gabrielle Miller hold their posters. (Photo courtesy Kristie Willett)

blood lead levels in Mississippi children.”

The students undertook a variety of activities to help stakeholders identify and address drinking water concerns. They:

- Analyzed public water system monitoring and testing data available through state and federal databases
- Assessed vulnerabilities of the piping systems and the effectiveness of drinking water treatment plants
- Prepared reports and educational materials for state agency personnel, public health professionals, extension agents,

municipalities, community partners and other stakeholders regarding findings

- Conducted outreach to raise awareness of common contaminants, regulation of drinking water supply and measures to reduce exposure
- Assisted with the planning and implementation of Lead Forum, a professional conference held in Jackson in October 2022

Following the conference in Jackson, students shared their posters during a reception held in their honor in the Great Room of the Honors College. **HR**

KRISTIE WILLETT WINS SEC FACULTY AWARD

BY ERIN GARRETT

As the 2023 SEC Faculty Achievement Award winner for the University of Mississippi, Kristie Willett is most excited about what the honor represents.

“Maybe I’m inspiring other women,” said Willett, chair of the university’s Department of BioMolecular Sciences. “In the past, there haven’t been as many female winners from UM, so I hope that other women who see me will be encouraged to apply in the future.”

The Southeastern Conference uses the Faculty Achievement awards to honor one faculty member from each of its 14 institutions for success in teaching, research and service.

Donna West-Strum, dean of the School of Pharmacy, said she is thrilled that Willett has been recognized as “one of the best in the SEC.”

“She is the model faculty member for outstanding research, teaching, community engagement and service, and her research has real, significant impact from oyster restoration to understanding cannabinoid developmental toxicology to improving drinking water safety,” West-Strum said.

Willett, who received her doctoral degree in toxicology at Texas A&M University, is a professor of pharmacology and environmental toxicology at the Ole Miss pharmacy school. Since joining the faculty 23 years ago, she has conducted groundbreaking research in the areas of environmental pollutants and cannabinoids.

Specifically, her lab uses zebrafish to study the developmental, reproductive and multigenerational effects of exposure to pollutants and cannabinoids.

Willett has investigated the environmental consequences of disasters, including the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and Hurricane Katrina. She also works with a multidisciplinary team of researchers



Standing between Chancellor Glenn Boyce and Provost Noel Wilkin, Kristie Willett, chair of the Department of BioMolecular Sciences and professor of pharmacology and environmental toxicology, holds a plaque after receiving UM’s 2022 Distinguished Research and Creative Achievement Award. (Photo by Kevin Bain)

who are dedicated to solving problems surrounding lead-contaminated drinking water.

Willett uses her research expertise to inspire the next generation of scientists. She has mentored more than 20 graduate students and some 60 high school and undergraduate students in her laboratory. She also teaches courses in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

To receive an SEC achievement award, a faculty member must have achieved the rank of full professor; have a record of extraordinary teaching, particularly at the undergraduate level; and have a record of research that is recognized nationally or internationally.

“I try to balance it all — teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels, having a continuous NIH-supported research program and administration,” Willett said. **HR**

Full story by Erin Garrett: news.olemiss.edu/biomolecular-sciences-chair-wins-sec-faculty-award

Editor’s Note: Some professors go above and beyond to regularly provide good news about their students. Kristie Willett champions her students’ research, academic drive and successes, and she frequently shares their accomplishments with the Honors College staff. We thank Professor Willett for her commitment to excellence, mentorship, research and teaching.



Nancy Maria Balach

FABULOUS FROM HEAD TO SHOES

Nancy Maria Balach, chair and professor of music and director of the University of Mississippi Institute for the Arts, brings dazzling warmth into any room. Her connection to the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College is longstanding as she has served several years on our honors admission committees, taught Honors 101/102 along with honors conversations courses, worked with honors students in the classroom, on stage, on their capstones and beyond graduation.

Professor Balach’s talents are many. Her personality and zest for life come with a graciousness and humility rare among leaders. When engaged in a conversation with her, you experience the treat of undivided attention; you know she is *tuned in* to you and the conversation. Additional guarantees? Her wit crackles. She possesses intelligence and creativity to spare.

She’ll be the first to praise her Hon 101/102 students, the first to applaud her peers and colleagues, and always the first to celebrate the love she has for her family. She may find herself on a literal pedestal at times — performing on stage or introducing a big name — but she stands atop a platform only to give back to those before her. And now enjoy a round of applause for Nancy Maria Balach as you read testimonies from students, alumni and colleagues. ***Thank you, Professor Balach, for all you do.***



Rodgers and Hammerstein, Lerner and Loewe, Han Solo and Chewbacca, Scooby and Shaggy. Now add Balach and Bramlett to the list of dynamic duos! The work that Nancy Maria and I do together doesn't feel like work at all, but rather a privilege and simply a treat. From performing on stage to directing and producing, and creating meaningful, impactful opportunities for our students in the performing arts at Ole Miss, there isn't a barrier too tall or wide that isn't conquerable. From student and professor to colleagues, partners and friends, it's rare such an evolution of a relationship exists. I count myself lucky to call Nancy Maria Balach my colleague and friend."

— **Brady Bramlett** (BA 16, MA 18), *SMBHC director of development and executive managing director of the Living Music Resource™*



Brady Bramlett and Nancy Maria Balach in 2023.
(Photo by Bill Dabney)



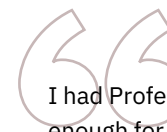
On UM's Oxford campus, Nancy Maria Balach poses with her spring 2023 Hon 102 class in front of the largest catalpa tree in Mississippi. On this day, the class focused on the lovely, powerful works of Aimee Nezhukumatathil's *World of Wonders* and essays by Elizabeth Kolbert. (Submitted photo)



After taking a fitness session led by Professor Balach during Honors Welcome Week, I switched into her Hon 101 section the first week of freshman year because it was that great of an experience! Throughout my time in her Honors 101 and 102 courses, she challenged me to think critically and exposed me to new viewpoints that established and deepened my beliefs. Professor Balach has been a phenomenal instructor and encourager during my four years in the Honors College and beyond."

— **Blair Wortsmith** (SMBHC 19, MA 21)

Blair Wortsmith and Nancy Maria Balach in 2019.
(Photo by Thomas Graning)



I had Professor Balach for Hon 101 and 102 in fall '18 and spring '19. I can't thank Professor Balach enough for the work she put into the courses and the dedication she had to see every one of us succeed. At first, I thought the course was strange; I am a 'math person' and was nervous that I would be working with a professor of music. However, I can now see that Professor Balach helped me understand the world in a more well-rounded way. Even now, as I study for a Ph.D. in economics, I can begin to see a complex modeling problem as a symphony of dynamic equations, each unique and necessary in its own way."

— **Kaden Grace** (SMBHC 22)



"She's the one with the shoes."

Nancy Maria Balach always wows a crowd with her presence, personality and phenomenal shoes.
(Photos by Thomas Graning)

“Nancy Maria Balach was a pivotal figure in my undergraduate experience. I was able to interact with her as a member of the University Concert Singers. I remember the many conversations that we had in the halls at the music building, just to catch up or me asking for advice. She believes in supporting students holistically, which can be rare for a professor. Most significantly for me, she supported my efforts to make the campus a better place. She would enthusiastically check in to offer encouraging words. I graduated from UM in 2020, and Professor Balach and I still keep in touch. In 2021, I came back to campus for the first time, and she took time out of her day for us to walk across campus and catch up. She affirms me and expresses how proud she is of me. That means the world. Professor Nancy Maria Balach is a rarity in higher education. Her radiance is evident from the moment she walks into any room. The college experience is particularly memorable because of the people that become integral in helping your development as a student. Professor Balach was one of those people for me, and I’m forever grateful.”

— Leah Davis (SMBHC 20)



After picking her up from the Memphis airport, John Michael Walker converts Nancy Maria Balach into a Kacey Musgraves fan. (Photo courtesy John Michael Walker)

“During my time at Ole Miss, Professor Balach was a crucial contributor to my development as a music professional. I often think about advice she gave me, that, to find success in the music world, one must develop a ‘mosaic career.’ Since my departure from Oxford, I’ve made it a point to wear many hats, and I’ve made my own little mosaic of singing, teaching and writing in Hartford, Connecticut.

Now, looking ahead to Ph.D. applications with my eyes set on becoming a professor, I have Professor Balach to thank for showing me what an innovative, engaged and supportive music educator looks like. Professor Balach and I have many great memories together, but my favorite is easily when, on a car ride back from Memphis International Airport, blasting ‘Golden Hour,’ we got retweeted by Kacey Musgraves herself.”

— John Michael Walker (SMBHC 21)



Nancy Maria Balach, director of the Institute for the Arts, stands with (from left) Brady Bramlett, Glen Ballard (UM 75), who received the 2023 Medal for the Arts this past spring, Bradford Cobb (UM 96) and Caroline Hourin (UM 14), UM associate director of development. (Submitted photo)

“I had the pleasure of having Nancy Maria Balach as my Hon 101 professor my freshman year, fall of 2016. Being a high performer in high school and coming from out of state, I came in as a freshman thinking I had nothing to learn from Mississippi, having already formed my opinions from the stereotypes. Yet in Hon 101, my initial opinions were challenged, and I grew academically and also grew in great appreciation for all that Mississippi is. From reading *Sanctuary of Outcasts* and *Dispatches from Pluto* (a personal favorite of mine now) and going to Walmart to pretend to grocery shop on a minimum wage budget, I learned so much about the world and the struggles many face. Professor Balach gently challenged our thinking and encouraged us to consider subjects from different angles. Hon 101 with Professor Balach was exactly what I needed my freshman year, and I am immensely grateful for the way she taught with great empathy and passion.” — Stephanie Green (SMBHC 20)



“Nancy Maria Balach is a wonderfully gifted artist, a dedicated, beloved professor, and a true leader in the arts at the University of Mississippi. We are all so fortunate to have her inspirational presence here in the SMBHC.”

— Bruce Levingston, Chancellor’s Honors College Artist in Residence and Holder of the Lester Glenn Fant Chair

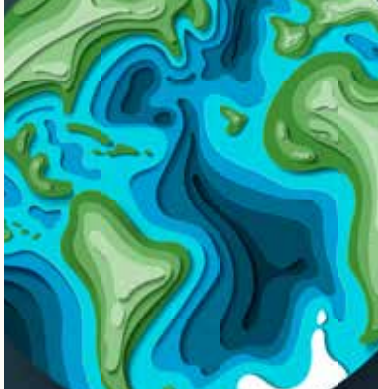
Bruce Levingston and Nancy Maria Balach share a laugh onstage at the Ford Center in 2020. (Photo by Thomas Graning)

“I was invited to a Zumba class during the Honors Welcome Week of my freshman year at Ole Miss. Little did I know that the fun and upbeat Zumba instructor would be my future honors thesis adviser and the most influential person in my time at the University of Mississippi. For pages, I could list Nancy Maria Balach’s admirable qualities and the precious lessons I learned from her. But, the most invaluable lesson Ms. Balach taught me was how to invest in people. See, Ms. Balach does not simply make the music department great, the University of Mississippi great or even the state of Mississippi great. Nancy Maria Balach makes people great. She invests in every student that has the privilege of interacting with her. She pushed me past what I believed my own limits to be. She taught me to turn ‘no’ into ‘not yet’; to work efficiently and energetically; and to cast my net of possibilities as wide as I can imagine. And, she does this all with professionalism, grace and in fabulous high heels. I will forever be grateful for the time she invested in me, and I can only hope to instill the same confidence in my own students. Thank you, Professor Balach.”

— Ava Street (SMBHC 20) [HR](#)



Nancy Maria Balach, Kate Teague and Ava Street (right) chat during an ‘LMR Live’ episode in 2018. (Photo by Thomas Graning)



CITIZEN SCHOLARS IN THE WORLD

1961



Kay Mounger Jones is part of a team working to preserve and improve the natural environment of her retirement home. For two years, Jones has composed and sent a newsletter to almost 100 subscribers about native plants found on the retirement home's campus.

1988



Jonathan Massey was promoted to chief medical officer at Panola Medical Center.

2001



Markeeva Morgan was promoted to vice president and program manager for the next Air Force One.

2002



Clarence Webster III was elected to the Mississippi Bar Board of Commissioners.

2006



Laura Godfrey Hendon was promoted to associate

professor in the School of Medicine at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, the highest academic rank ever achieved by a genetic counselor in the state of Mississippi.

2007



After teaching for nine years at Lafayette High School in Oxford, **Scotty Jimenez** (SMBHC 07, MA 09) won Teacher of the Year for the Lafayette County School District in 2021. He switched to Oxford High School in 2022 to teach upper-level Spanish. He will lead his fifth trip with students to Costa Rica during spring break 2024.

2008



Board certified in general surgery, **Ariel Rodgers** is completing a burn surgery

fellowship and the next academic year will complete a fellowship in surgical critical care at the University of Utah.

2011



Sarah Rogers Burke is deputy staff director for the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Rachel Johnson was promoted to director of DIY customer experience and strategy at Advance Auto Parts.

2013



Jess Waltman (BAccy 13, JD 16) is an attorney with the law firm Gordon, Arata, Montgomery, Barnett, McCollam, Duplantis & Eagan LLC in New Orleans, and he completed his term as president of the Young Lawyers Division of the Mississippi Bar. Waltman is licensed to practice law in Alabama, Arizona, Louisiana and Mississippi, and he is admitted to practice before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit and the Supreme Court of the

United States. In June 2023, Waltman was recognized as the "New Lawyer of the Year" by the Mississippi Association for Justice.

2014

Tim Abram was selected as a Neubauer Civic Scholar, which affords recipients a full tuition scholarship to pursue an MBA from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

In August 2022, **Brad Lanier** (BA 14, MA 17) began a new job with ICF International as the national accounts manager for beneficial electrification.



Rose Ann (Foster) Mullet accepted a job in August as one of Lakehill Preparatory School's Upper School English teachers. Mullet presented her paper, "Structural and Characterization Choices in Young Adult Mystery Novels that Reference Popular Media & Cater to Today's Teen," at the Southwest Popular/American Culture Conference in February.



Samra Ward Smith (BA 14, MA 16) serves as director of accessibility services for San Jacinto College's five campuses in Houston, Texas. As director of accessibility services, Smith ensures that students with disabilities and chronic illnesses receive accommodations that promote success in academic and clinical settings. Smith also frequently presents on accessibility topics such as social media accessibility and accessible event planning at the national level, and she has been recognized nationally for this work by the North American Student Personnel Association. Although Smith has identified as a disability advocate since childhood, she notes that completing community action components for the SMBHC in 2013 first helped her realize that she wanted to do so professionally.

2015

Kaitlyn Barton won the 2023 Rather Prize for School Innovation at South by Southwest EDU for her project Ballot & Ride, a school-based program that amplifies student voices through the ballot box. The program educates students about the democratic process, hosting voter registration drives and providing transportation to the polls to encourage lifelong participation in our democracy.



Over the summer, **Christine Dickason** graduated with a Ph.D. in education policy and leadership from Vanderbilt University's Peabody College.



On May 27, **Connor Hagan** and **Dr. Alison Neel** (SMBHC 16) were happily married in Memphis, Tennessee, after dating for eight years. They have started their married life in Houston, Texas, as Neel begins practicing dentistry and Hagan continues his work as an FBI spokesman.



Attorney **Joshua S. Horton** was recently admitted into SCOTUS and opened his own practice. He litigates for consumer victims of fraud in Palm Beach County, Florida, state and federal courts.

2016



Palmer Avisto has lived in Manhattan for the last five years and began a new job last year working for an impact investing firm ("Ethic") where passion and purpose combine to create an incredible mission-driven strategy. "While there may be few Ole Miss grads up here, I can confirm the urge to say 'Hotty Toddy' at any sign of Ole Miss affiliation has never ceased."



Emily Anne (Sharpe) Badger married her college sweetheart, **Jack Badger** (SMBHC 16), on Oct. 8, 2022 in New Orleans. They are living in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and are looking forward to seeing what the future holds as Jack finishes his Ph.D. in accounting.

2017



In October 2022, **Alicia Dixon** completed a Master of Laws in art, business and law from Queen Mary University of London. She returned to London to walk in the graduation in January, which was great, since she earned her J.D. in 2020 and never got to walk due to the pandemic. In November 2022, Dixon began work as an attorney adviser for the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing.



Amy Hall recently completed her first trial, a patent infringement case in the International Trade Commission against Apple, where she put two expert witnesses on direct. She began her first jury trial in Waco, Texas, in August — also against Apple.



In February, **Rachel Anderson-Park** began a new job in global public affairs and strategic communications at the U.S. Department of State. In March, she married her partner, Adam Park, celebrating with traditional Korean and modern American wedding ceremonies.

2018



Sangeet Adhikari graduated from Arizona State University with his doctoral degree in 2022. He has four patents and 25-plus peer-reviewed articles published in high-impact journals. He is working as a development scientist at Thermo Fisher Scientific to apply cutting-edge mass spectrometry techniques, computer proficiency and expertise to enhance human well-being through a variety of applications.

Alex Fratesi wrote, "I got married to the love of my life, graduated medical school and started (general) surgery residency all in the same year!"



Daniel Pompa has his dream job working remotely for quantum computing company Quantinuum. He works closely with leading researchers in their fields and frequently travels both domestically and internationally. Pictured is Pompa with his wife and oldest daughter on a recent business trip in Munich, Germany.



After three years of teaching in Mississippi public schools, **Alexis Smith** (BA 18, MAT 20) made the move to the "ever-enchanted" Western Montana. She is finishing up her fifth year of teaching English and has spent the last two years teaching in a rural, Title I school on the banks of the Clark Fork River. Due to the small size of her school, she teaches English to essentially every high school student. Smith wrote, "Public education gave me more than I could ever recount as a young person, and in a time when public education is facing monumental challenges, I am lucky to have found a place in the

world that freely allows me to educate and learn alongside some of the most interesting, empathetic and intelligent teenagers."

2019



Following her graduation from the University of Mississippi School of Law in 2022, **Brittney Jackson** was selected to intern with the National Collegiate Athletics Association, or NCAA, as a Division I Governance postgraduate intern. Upon completing her internship, Jackson accepted a job with the Big 12 Conference in Dallas as assistant director of compliance for Big 12 member institutions.



Will Sistrunk graduated from the University of Mississippi Medical Center in May and will pursue a psychiatry residency at LSU New Orleans.

2020



Anna Katherine Bowles graduated in May with her Doctor of Physical Therapy from Virginia Commonwealth University. She's been hired as a physical therapist at J.W. Ruby Memorial Hospital (WVU Medicine).



Tharangi Fernando graduated with a Master of Science in college student affairs and works at the University of South Carolina as peer consultant manager for its student success center.



After a whirlwind five-month trip abroad to visit friends and family in Australia, Vietnam, Spain and Italy, **Jacqueline Knirnschild**

moved to Orono, Maine, to begin study for a Master of Arts in English literature with a concentration in creative writing at the University of Maine. She was awarded a competitive teaching assistantship, and for her thesis, she plans on writing a book-length collection of short stories. She will graduate from the program in 2025.



Lauren Koehler met her husband while in physical therapy school, and they both recently graduated with their doctorates in physical therapy and are employed on the coast of North Carolina.

Ashley Sekul published her honors thesis in the journal *Brain Imaging and Behavior* under Toshikazu Tossi, associate professor of communication sciences and disorders. Sekul completed the didactic portion of her master's in health administration at the George Washington University and will go on to be a fellow at MD Anderson Cancer Center.



Megan Stubbs went to graduate school for a Master of Science in biology at West Liberty University, West Virginia, and was part of the Crayfish Conservation Lab. She is finishing writing her thesis remotely and will graduate in December. Recently, she started a three-month Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education, or ORISE, fellowship with the USDA Forest Service in Oxford, to work on a crayfish life history project. After completing her thesis, she will move to Germany to join her boyfriend.



In February, **Sam Wright** graduated from Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas. He will be flying the B-52H Stratofortress in the U.S. Air Force.

2021



Lilli Gordon moved to Boston last fall to begin grad school at Harvard School of Dental Medicine.

Connor McCarthy (SMBHC 21, MACcy 22) passed the CPA and established a career in Tampa, Florida.



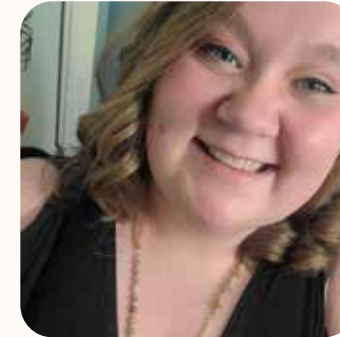
Taylor Schwartz graduated with a master's in speech-language pathology from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Cade Slaughter began a new role this year as operations director for U.S. Sen. Mitt Romney of Utah.



Gillian Steeno graduated from the University of Arkansas with a Master of Arts in anthropology. She is the society/survey liaison at the Arkansas Archeological Survey.

2022



In July, **Alana Andrus** graduated from the University of Mississippi Medical Center's School of Nursing in Oxford. She is working at UMMC in Jackson and anticipates publishing her research within the next six months.



Zuri Dixon completed her second bachelor's degree in August and will soon be working at an emergency department in Mississippi.



Olivia Jaramillo Peets just finished a year abroad as a Fulbright Teaching Assistant in Colombia, South America. She did it all with her husband and fellow Honors College grad, **Reed Peets** (SMBHC 22), and they recently celebrated one year of marriage.



MyKayla Williamson, a master's student at Cornell University, has successfully completed all the required coursework for her master's degree. Alongside writing her thesis, Williamson has chosen to enroll in additional courses to earn a certification in historic preservation planning at Cornell. [HR](#)

THE PROJECT *Track*

BY TIMOTHY YENTER,
ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR CAPSTONE

Seeking a dual degree in biological science and science education, Alexandria “Alex” Mabry (SMBHC 22) was ready to drop out of the Honors College.

She had put so much time into her work as Associated Student Body treasurer while carrying a difficult pre-med course load, she didn’t believe she could complete an honors capstone – but she did. She had spent over a year putting together a new formula for determining how student fees would be collected and then distributed to recognized campus organizations. Her research showed that the University of Mississippi lagged far behind other SEC schools in how it calculated student activity fees.

While most UM students paid \$5 per semester, undergraduate students contributed on average \$873 at Auburn and \$715 at Vanderbilt. By raising the fee to just \$30 for a 15-credit course load, student organizations could access tens of thousands of dollars in funds with little effect to the cost of attendance for students.

“Honestly, I think the coolest part for me is knowing that even though I may have graduated (from) the university ... my work is still at the university, making a huge impact to this day,” Mabry said.

One of the student organizations that benefited from the new system was Women in Dentistry, a new UM club started by Lakin Cramer (SMBHC 23).

Reflecting on her experiences applying to dental school led Cramer to recognize significant challenges that women face in the process. By doing an honors capstone on the topic, she created space in her rigorous schedule to find the resources available from national organizations,

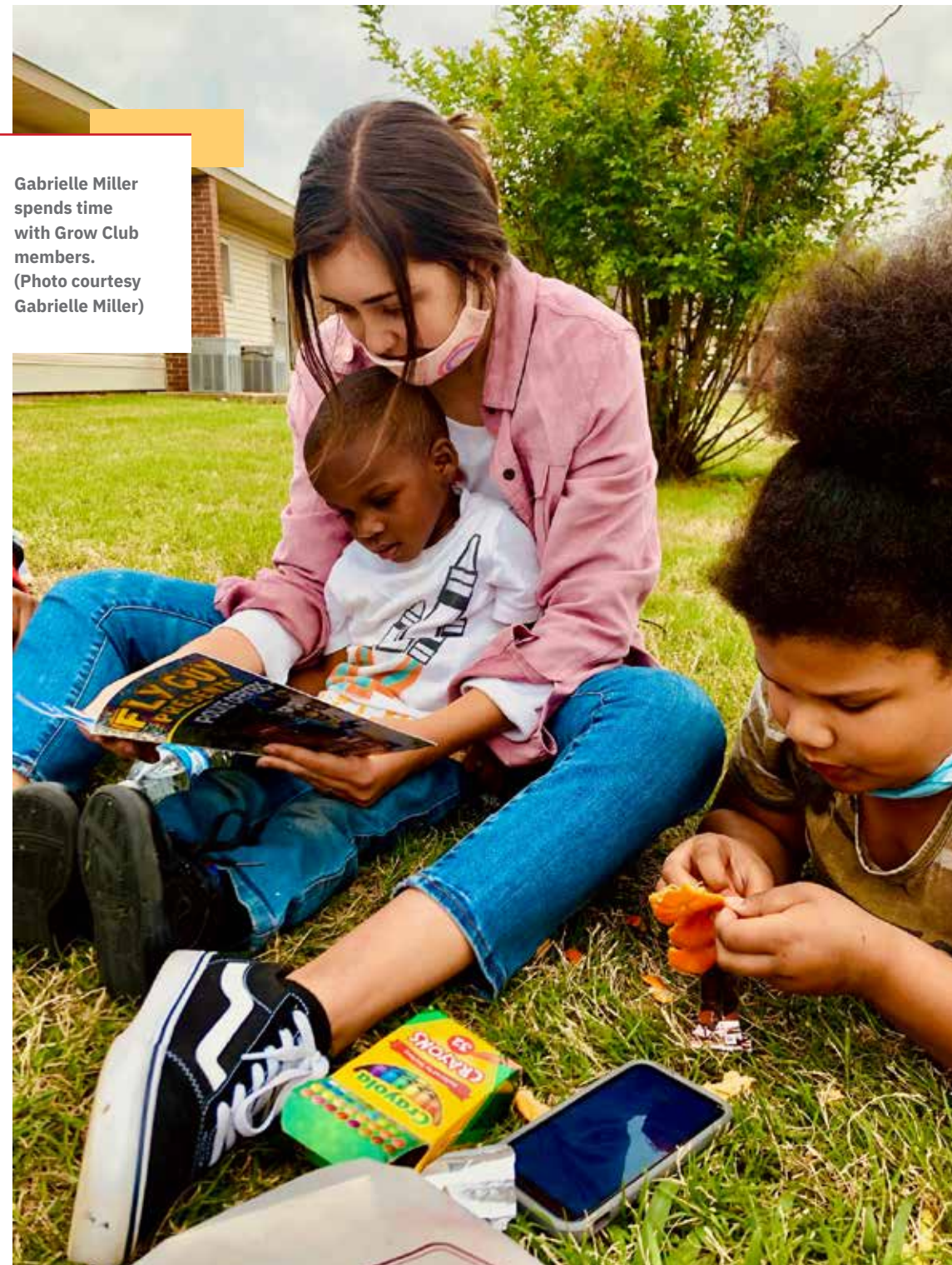


Alex Mabry (left) poses with a sticker, designed by Georgiann McCullough, promoting a yes vote for the increased student activity fee. (Photo by Lily Henley)



Lakin Cramer (Submitted photo)

Gabrielle Miller spends time with Grow Club members. (Photo courtesy Gabrielle Miller)



explore the history of women in dentistry, reflect on her personal motivations and eventually develop the club that had dozens of participants in its first semester.

Finding female dentists to serve as mentors, practicing the skills needed for dental school exams and developing a 5K fundraiser for future scholarships, Cramer earned her biochemistry degree while accomplishing an incredible amount in her last two semesters, creating an organization that can carry on the work she started.

Honors students do research during their capstones that leads to professional publications, secures funding for graduate school, wins national awards and lands jobs. But the capstone is not only about research and preprofessional training. Some capstones emphasize community commitment; we call this commitment the “project track” because we recognize the diverse transformative projects that our citizen scholars are doing on campus, in the state and beyond. The capstone process is one way to support students as they make their communities better.

For Gabrielle Miller (SMBHC 23), making her community better meant spending time in the CB Webb neighborhood in Oxford, which connected to her undergraduate degree in social work.

Out of the classroom due to COVID, kids in the neighborhood were having trouble with on-line learning. Applying skills she learned in her social work classes, she developed Grow Club to provide fun educational opportunities and remedial instruction twice per week. Identifying further needs, she partnered with the Oxford Community Market to build six garden boxes.

To support the work she was doing, Anne Cafer, UM associate dean for research, scholarship and graduate education and associate professor of sociology, worked with Miller to turn her work into an honors capstone. The childhood food insecurity rate in Lafayette County is double the national average, and through her capstone, Miller developed a plan to sustain the program after she graduated, including expanding education, food and transportation. Children who have benefited from Grow Club are returning as mentors for younger kids in the neighborhood.

Mary Patton Murphy (SMBHC 23) also responded to the pandemic with creativity and grit. Inspired by young people around the country who were creating podcasts that she loved, and drawing on her love for people's stories cultivated in her English degree, she started "Be Loved, Be Bold," a faith-based podcast in which she interviewed other young people she admired about their spiritual journeys.

Working with Brad Conaway, a UM instructional assistant professor of social media and data analytics who teaches a course on podcasts, Murphy developed an honors capstone that lays out a step-by-step procedure that anyone can use to create and market a podcast. Through talking with others about her capstone, including her mentors through the Ole Miss Women's Council,



Mary Patton Murphy (Photo by Bill Dabney)

Murphy landed her first job as a project manager at Project Redesign Nashville, and the position will involve podcast development.

Through project-track capstones, the Honors College supports students turning their passions for the world around them into something sustainable. The effect is not just on the communities but on the student.

"It showed me that I was capable of leading an entire team of people," Mabry said. "I became a whole lot more confident in my abilities as a leader. Now that I'm in medical school, that's really something I have to remind myself of." **HR**

Honors capstones can be viewed at egrove.olemiss.edu/hon_thesis.



2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS

06
23

Ethel Scurlock, John Samonds, Penny Leeton and Brady Bramlett traveled to Washington, D.C., to reunite with honors alumni and students for a variety of gatherings as a part of the UM Alumni Association's annual Mississippi on the Mall. We are proud of the many SMBHC alumni and students representing UM and Mississippi so well in our nation's capital.



Dean Ethel Scurlock and **Jessica Herron** (SMBHC 22) on Capitol Hill. Herron earned a bachelor's degree in English and now works as a legislative clerk at the House Committee on Energy and Commerce and also serves on the Subcommittee on Innovation, Data and Commerce in Washington, D.C. (Photo by Sarah Rogers Burke, SMBHC 11)



From left, **Eva Kiparizoska** (SMBHC 22), **Penny Leeton** and **Sara Kiparizoska Goodman** (SMBHC 16, UMMC 20) at Mississippi on the Mall. (Photo by Brady Bramlett)



Morgan Atkins (left) (SMBHC 22) and **Swetha Manivannan** (SMBHC 21) take a selfie at Mississippi on the Mall. (Photo courtesy Swetha Manivannan)

FUNDRAISING AND DEVELOPMENT

Highlights



Adrian (left), Alexandria and Dana Cartier, of St. Louis, Missouri, have made a gift to support UM Department of Mathematics graduate students and the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College. Adrian Cartier is also devoting time to serve on both the College of Liberal Arts' and the Honors College's campaign committees. (Submitted photo)

Shaping the Future of Ole Miss

CARTIERS SUPPORT MATHEMATICS, HONORS COLLEGE

Dana and Adrian Cartier, of St. Louis, Missouri — who believe mathematics offers the key to success for many fields — are committed to giving the next generation of University of Mississippi students the tools they need to thrive.

The two alumni gave a \$50,000 gift to create the Dr. Adrian and Dana Cartier Graduate Student Stipend Fund for the Department of Mathematics and to support the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College Fund.

“By offering support to these talented students, we can help them achieve their dreams, further their knowledge and impact the world in meaningful ways,” Adrian Cartier said. “I believe investing in the future of mathematics is an investment in the future of society itself. It is only by supporting the brightest minds of today that we can ensure a better tomorrow.

“As such, I believe our gift will have a lasting impact, inspiring generations of students to pursue excellence and innovate in the field of mathematics.”

Adrian Cartier, who grew up in Jackson, earned undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees in mathematics from Ole Miss, while Dana Cartier, a native of Belleville, Illinois, pursued an undergraduate degree in mathematics. The two met, dated and married on the Oxford campus.

“Not only do Adrian and I want to provide the amazing opportunity of studying mathematics to students, but we also want to continue to grow talent and elevate the field of mathematics. So many impressive mathematicians made their way to Ole Miss, and we are pleased to help continue that tradition,” she said. **HR**

Full story by Tina Hahn: nowandever.olemiss.edu/stories/shaping-the-future-of-ole-miss/

Giving Day 2023

The Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College raised \$67,043 from 113 donors during this year's Giving Day! Here are just a few highlights from the transformative one day, eight hours and 48 minutes:

- **Reed Ingram**, of Jackson, continually honors the life of his late son and honors alumnus, **Benson Reed**. After 25 donors earmarked their Giving Day donation to the Benson Reed Ingram Junior Entrants Honors College Scholarship, Reed Ingram gave an additional \$10,000 to the fund.
- Two anonymous young alumni, of North Carolina, celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College during Giving Day. For every 20 gifts made to the Honors College on Giving Day, the young alumni gave \$5,000 up to \$25,000. We are proud of our donors for meeting the challenge and thankful for the anonymous \$25,000 gift!
- Thank you to **Jessica Tran** (SMBHC 19, UMMC 23) for being instrumental in gathering dozens of donations from young alumni.
- Thank you, **Leighton McCool**, for donating \$1,000 in honor of your son, **Davis McCool** (SMBHC 20).
- **Bryce Barrett** (SMBHC 24) gave a donation in honor of his honors French 303/304 professor, **Alexandre Dubois**, who encouraged him to add a French major.
- **Monique and Willard Beals** gave a donation in honor of their daughter **Marché Beals** (SMBHC 26).
- **Jess Cooley** (SMBHC 22) honored Spanish professors **Enrique and Irene Cotel**.
- **Jess Waltman** (SMBHC 13, JD 16) and **James Robertson** (SMBHC 12) gave a donation in memory of **John Winkle**.
- Many donors gave in honor of others, including **Fred Caraway, Linda Whitten, Johnnie Bell Cooper, Douglass Sullivan-González, Julius Minor, Luigi Vampa, Brady Bramlett, George and Jan Pilko, Hermine, Jane and Senton Granberry, Donald Walters, Harriet W. Young, Ethel Young Scurlock, Jennifer Parsons, Kayla VonBurg-King and Ada Parsons.**



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Young Alumnus Makes Investment

HONORS COLLEGE GRADUATE ESTABLISHES OLE MISS FIRST SCHOLARSHIP

BY TINA HAHN

Daniel Roberts, a 2014 University of Mississippi graduate, has established an Ole Miss First scholarship in hopes of planting seeds that will thrive and help students enjoy an exceptional college experience. He becomes one of the youngest alumni ever to establish an Ole Miss First scholarship.

Ole Miss First provides scholarships to students demonstrating outstanding scholastic achievement and leadership. During their four undergraduate years, scholars meet with mentors to receive the guidance and encouragement they need to take chances, explore opportunities and make a difference.

“Mentorship played a huge role in my life from high school to college to even now,” said Roberts, of Washington, D.C., a Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College alumnus. “I want to make sure a young person has the same opportunity. I believe giving back is much more than donating money — it’s about planting seeds that live on longer than you.

“I hope this scholarship unlocks the next level of success for the young person who receives it,” he continued. “I want this to give them the tools to tackle college courses, land internships and eventually obtain their dream job while also inspiring them to one day reach back and change the life of a future student.”

Ole Miss First scholars have been recognized in many ways for their UM achievements. Examples include ASB officer, Hall of Fame, Ole Miss Ambassador, Orientation Leader, Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, Rhodes Scholar, Taylor Medalist, Truman Scholar, Class Favorite, Homecoming Maid, Freshman Council, Omicron Delta Kappa and Columns Society.

“We are thrilled to welcome Daniel to the Ole Miss First family as a scholarship donor,” said Rosie McDavid, the program’s manager. “His love for the university and his passion for enhancing educational opportunities for deserving students is contagious.



Daniel Roberts (Submitted photo)

“As a college student, Daniel pursued every opportunity that was offered to him, and now as a successful professional, he wants to pay those opportunities forward. His gift and story will impact our students in profound ways. We are so grateful for Daniel’s gift to Ole Miss First!”

Roberts credits his parents for influencing the value he places on giving back.

“I saw my mom and dad give tremendous amounts when I was a kid, whether time, money or volunteering. They poured into our church, community, family and friends — and I realized early how it truly changed people’s lives for the better.”

Scholarships and more influenced Roberts’ decision to choose Ole Miss as his college home.

“I applied to over 20 colleges and received nearly \$1 million in scholarship offers, but Ole Miss offered something special: Southern values,

I WAS JUST AS BUSY OUTSIDE OF CLASS AS I WAS INSIDE. I SERVED AS PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE ASB SENATE WHERE I AUTHORED ONE OF THE **BIGGEST PIECES OF LEGISLATION IN OLE MISS HISTORY, CREATING THE SMOKE-FREE CAMPUS THAT IS STILL IN EFFECT TODAY.**

DANIEL ROBERTS

academic excellence and exceptional opportunities through the Honors College, Lott Institute and internship program,” the public policy leadership major said.

The university granted him scholarships that covered all four undergraduate years, supported his internship with first lady Michelle Obama and enabled him to study abroad in Ecuador, Germany and South Africa.

“These experiences gave me a global perspective that laid the foundation for my career,” he said. “I was just as busy outside of class as I was inside. I served as president pro tempore of the ASB Senate where I authored one of the biggest pieces of legislation in Ole Miss history, creating the smoke-free campus that is still in effect today.”

Roberts said he found joy in making an impact campuswide, serving as campaign manager for the first African American woman elected ASB president, joining Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity and being active in the Black Student Union, Columns Society and Chancellor’s Leadership Class.

“Ole Miss taught me the art of using both personality and wit to get the job done,” Roberts said. “It’s not about being the smartest person in the room; it’s about making genuine connections with other talented people to reach a common goal.”

Since graduation, he has worked in policy roles at the White House and Congress and in communications positions at Facebook, Lyft and Viacom International. Now, he’s head of communications

for BrightDrop, a commercial electric vehicles and logistics startup by General Motors.

The Ole Miss Alumni Association selected Roberts as a 2022 “40 Under 40” award recipient, and he was inducted into the 2014 Ole Miss Student Hall of Fame. Recently, he was invited to join the Honors College Leadership Council and the Lott Institute’s Alumni Advisory Board.

“I feel energized each day knowing that the gifts I am blessed with are helping others,” he said. “I love the analogy of planting seeds because, throughout life, we all accumulate tiny seeds. It’s our choice to hoard them for ourselves or plant them so others can also enjoy the beautiful trees, flowers and harvests they produce. Knowing that I’m leaving something meaningful truly fulfills me.”

To make a gift to the Daniel C. Roberts Ole Miss First Scholarship, scan the QR code. Alumni and friends can also mail checks to the University of Mississippi Foundation, with the fund’s name noted in the check’s memo line, to 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655. **HR**



For more information on creating scholarships, contact Brady Bramlett, director of development, at bradyb@olemiss.edu or 662-915-3081.

Thank You

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Brady Bramlett (Photo by Tenola Plaxico)



Dear SMBHC Alumni and Friends,

You know the drill. August rolls around, students swarm campus, distant sounds of the fight song fill the air during band practice, and the energy doesn't stop until graduation in May. Don't blink, or you'll miss it all!

As we move into the 175th anniversary of our beloved university, I'm reminded of how important community is to the success of not only our students but anyone who steps foot on campus. You hear it all the time, Ole Miss is a family. You see it when you walk through any airport in the country and hear a warm "Hotty Toddy!" from a stranger who sees the Ole Miss logo.

I believe the SMBHC is one of the best, most effective communities that sets the University of Mississippi apart from all other institutions. That is thanks to the generosity and leadership of our alumni and friends who support the Honors College. Our students represent the highest caliber of higher education thanks to the high-impact learning opportunities provided by your financial support.

Our Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College prepares citizen scholars who are fired by the life of the mind, committed to the public good and driven to find solutions. Help me continue to make our Honors College a community of future leaders and problem solvers. I look forward to seeing our incredible alumni on the road.

Brady Bramlett
Director of Development

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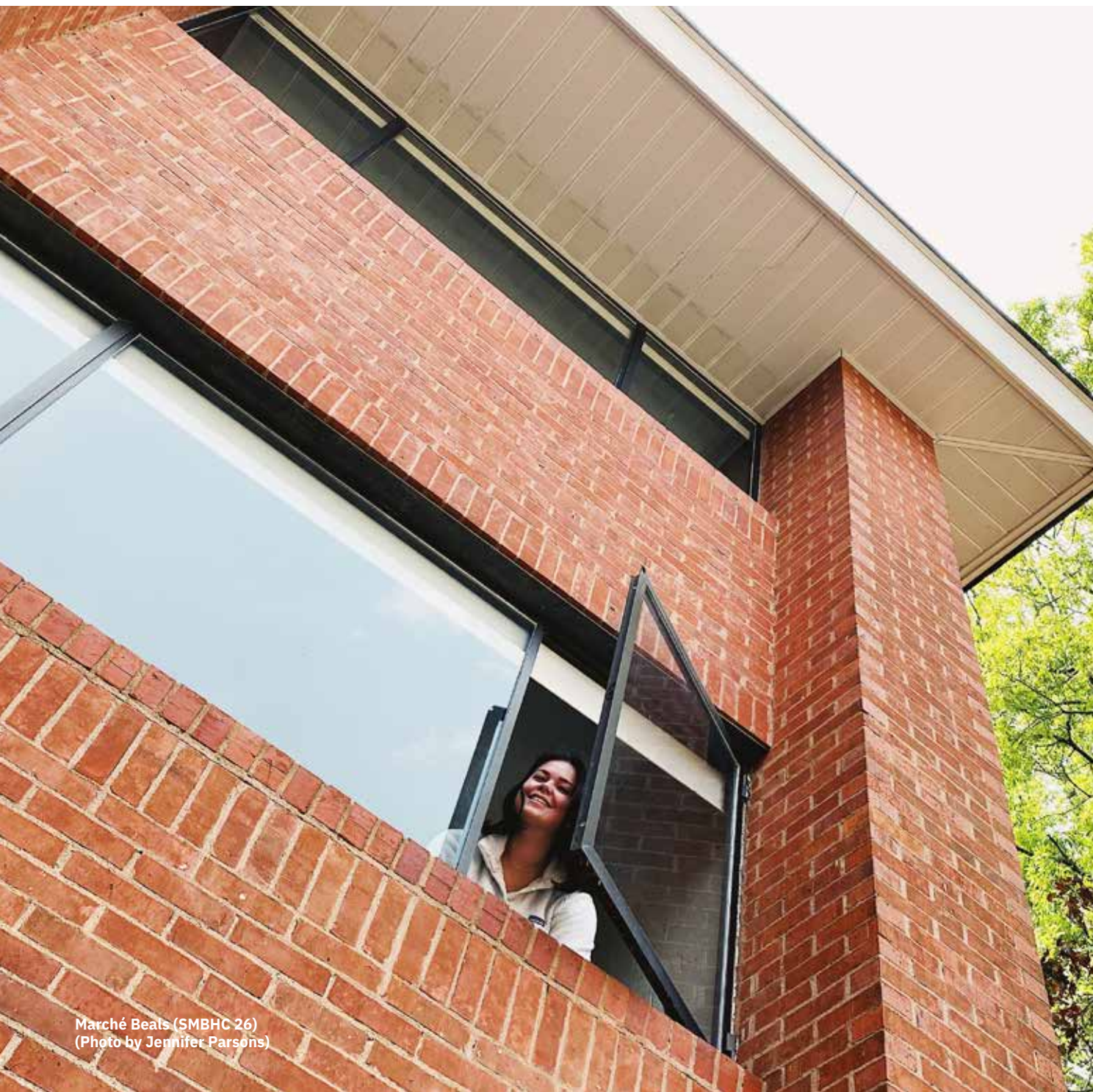
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Marché Beats (SMBHC 26)
(Photo by Jennifer Parsons)